MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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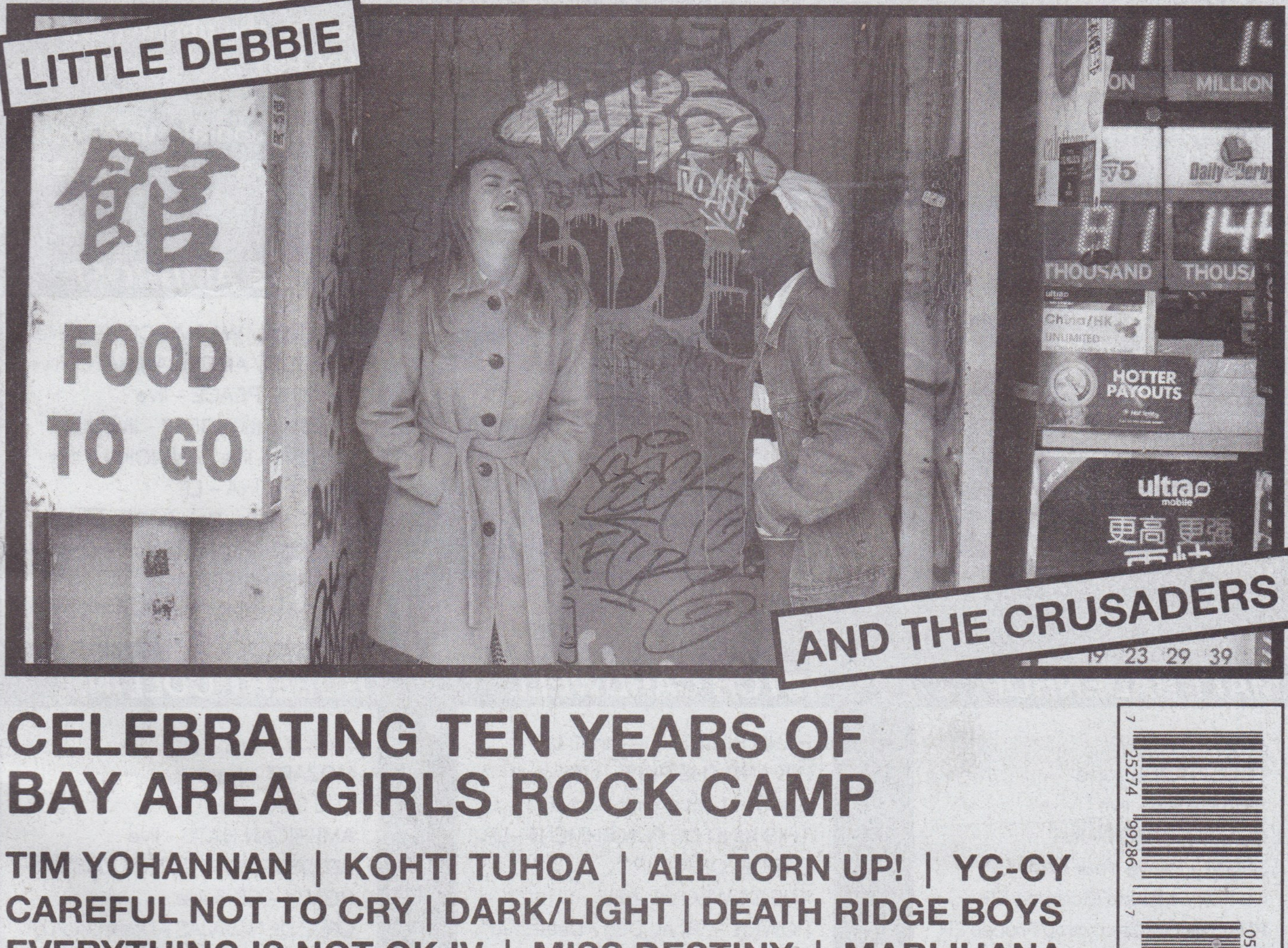
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EVERYTHING IS NOT OK IV | MISS DESTINY | MARIJUANA

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Send interviews, articles, scene reports, photos, and ads to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Call us on the phone between 10AM and 10PM PST at (415) 923-9814.

More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

MENTIRA / WARM BODIES – live
THE BUG / AMERICAN HATE – live
BEYOND PEACE – live
SPECIAL INTEREST – live
LITHICS – live / ANINOKO – live
BARCELONA – LP
FATALITAS – Pas de Chance EP
NORMS – Hülye Hardcore CS
SHAPESHIFTER – CS
THE NUMBER ONES – EP

MATT BADENHOP

APSURD – live
TÔLE FROIDE – live
SKOTODINI – live
COLD LEATHER – live
SBSM – Leave Your Body EP
ULTRA – Mistica Moderna EP
PREENING – Greasetrap Frisbee EP
PADKAROSDA – Tetova Lelkek LP
EXOTICA – Musique Exotique #02 LP
BARCELONA – LP

MITCH CARDWELL

BEND SINISTER – Tape2 LP
RIK AND THE PIGS – LP
SBSM – Leave Your Body EP
THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT –LP
BARCELONA – LP
THE COWBOYS – all
POWER – "Road Dog / Death Kid"
SCRAP BRAIN – EP
PREENING – Greasetrap Frisbee EP
ROYAL BRAT – Eyesore LP

ROBERT COLLINS

FANCY – live
MOZART – live
THE BUG – live
AMERICAN HATE – live
BEROSSZULÁS/YOUTH SUCKS – CS
ROLEX – CS & live
CRUZ DE NAVAJAS – Dominacion LP
JAD – demo CS
END TIME – Empty Spaces 12"
CHERRY DEATH – live

JOAN DETORO

SBSM – Leave Your Body EP
BARCELONA – LP
SCRAP BRAIN – EP
ROLEX – CS
DIVIDE & DISSOLVE – live
NORMS – Hülye Hardcore CS
RAD – Sacramento Is Rad +1 CS
PADKAROSDA – Tetova Lelkek LP
ULTRA – Mistica Moderna EP
MOZART – live

MIRANDA FISHER

RIK AND THE PIGS – LP
THE COWBOYS – all
ROLEX – CS
BARCELONA – LP
SCRAP BRAIN – EP
THE NUMBER ONES – EP
PADKAROSDA – Tetova Lelkek LP
SLAUGHTER BOYS – EP
STRAIGHT ARROWS – 45
BEND SINISTER – Tape2 LP

LAYLA GIBBON

SHOPPING/LITHICS/THE WORLD – live
SBSM – Leave Your Body EP
RIK AND THE PIGS – all
SLENDER – Walled Garden EP
BARCELONA – LP
THE NUMBER ONES – EP
ANXIETY – Wild Life EP
SCRAP BRAIN – EP
ARMEDALITE RIFLES – LP
REAL KIDS – CD / THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT – LP

GREG HARVESTER

MINIMA – live
NOSA – live
SBSM – Leave Your Body EP
NO BABIES – LP
COLD LEATHER – live
APSURD – live
ULTRA – Mistica Moderna EP
SKOTODINI – live
PREENING – Greasetrap Frisbee EP
SHOPLIFTERS – live

RAY LUJAN

BOWS – Neverunite EP
BUNDLES – Deaf Dogs LP
END TIME – Empty Spaces EP
MARDOU – Cold Grasp LP
NO BABIES – LP / SHEATHE – CD
THE NUMBER ONES – EP
PINEAPPLES – 45
SILENT ERA – O Horizon LP
THE SMUDJAS – LP
SKELETAL FAMILY – live
LIMP WRIST – live

FRED SCHRUNK

SILENT ERA – O Horizon LP
END TIME – Empty Spaces 12"
SBSM – Leave Your Body EP
ANXIETY – Wild Life EP
SCRAP BRAIN – EP
RIK AND THE PIGS – LP
ULTRA – Mistica Moderna EP
EXOTICA – Musique Exotique #02 LP
BARCELONA – LP
THE NUMBER ONES – EP

KENNY KAOS

Vacation, all he ever wanted.

MARISSA MAGIC

Adrift...

CAROLYN KEDDY

CRUZ DE NAVAJAS – Dominacion LP
RIK AND THE PIGS – all and live
THE REAL KIDS – CD
BRUISER QUEEN – Heavy High LP
MUSTAT KALSARIT – Juhlat LP
THE CAVEMEN – Nuke Earth LP
STRAIGHT ARROWS – 45 /
FATALITAS – Pas De Chance EP
AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS – LP
BARCELONA – LP / EXOTICA – LP
DEAD ON ARRIVAL – film

ROTTEN RON READY

AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS – LP
POWER – "Road Dog / Death Kid"
SBSM – Leave Your Body EP
THE CAVEMEN – Nuke Earth LP
SLENDER – Walled Garden EP
SLAUGHTER BOYS – EP
KLASSE KRIMINALE – EP
RIK AND THE PIGS – LP
FATALITAS – Pas De Chance EP
SMUT – live

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This is a contributor-driven magazine. We need help writing reviews, editing, doing layouts, processing mail, maintaining our archive, and more.

Wanna be a shitworker?
Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

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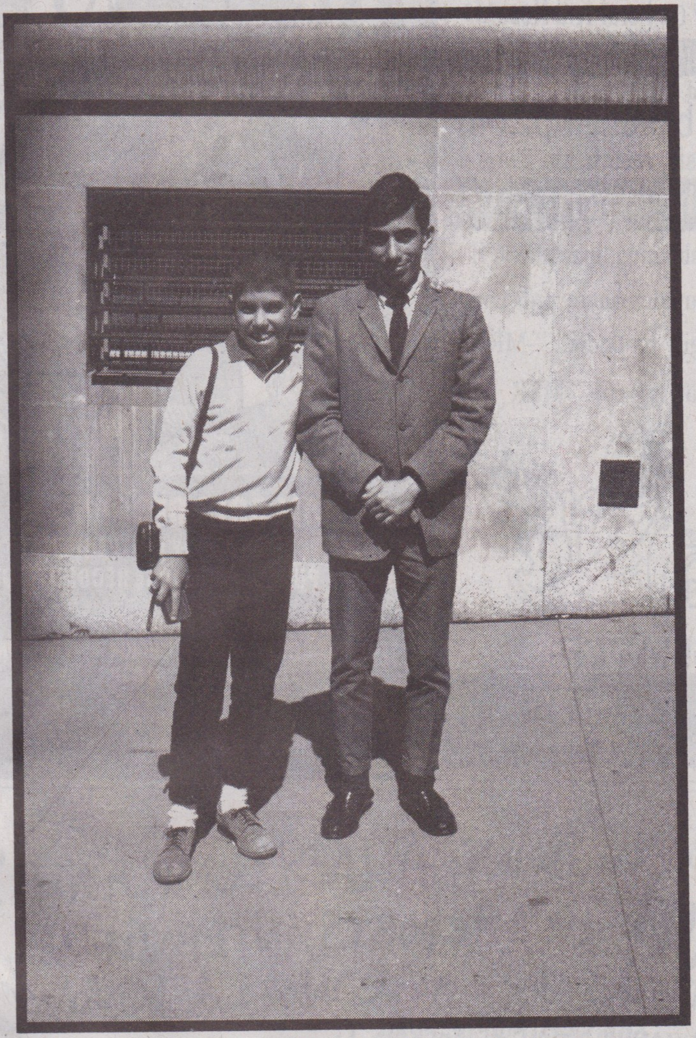

The Yohannan brothers. Photo provided by Tom Yohannan.

FRONT COVER: Top: Little Debbie & the Crusaders by Chelsey del Castillo. Bottom: Psychosis and TMZZ, provided by BAGRC.

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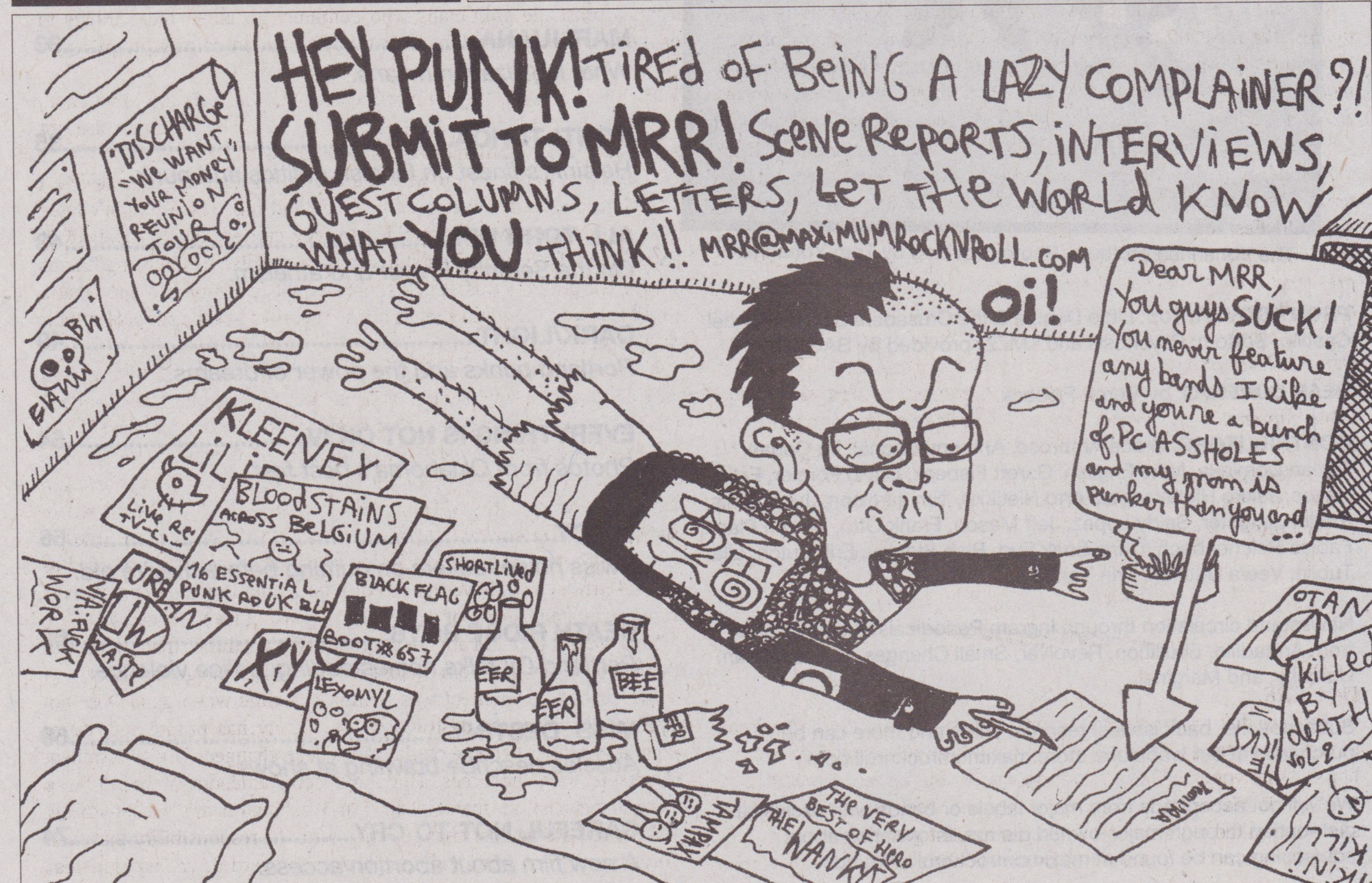
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LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

After over three years of publishing his work, we have decided to terminate Turbo & Gang's column from Maximum Rocknroll. *The straw that broke the camel's back came with a review of a compilation documenting the NYC Oi! Fest that he included in his column in issue #419. Every currently active editor at* MRR *does not follow Oi! closely, so in hindsight we should not have been surprised when we received an anonymous complaint about Turbo's review. The caller told us that NYC Oi! Fest had been explicitly written about by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a gathering of far-right and neo-Nazi bands, and claims that bands on the bill have ties to white nationalist groups. We concurred rather quickly with SPLC's report of the festival, which in their words was a festival that existed not just as an Oi! concert, but also for "the promotion of bigotry and the attraction of others to extremist politics." In his review, Turbo indicates that he attended the festival. Not only was he present, but he also praises the festival, saying that the album is "a testament to the bands and individuals that made NYC Oi! Fest a success and who continue to offer a platform for true and unapologetic Oi! in the face of opposition from outsiders and agitators."*

It should go without saying that Maximum Rocknroll *is firmly against the far-right and neo-Nazi ideologies as well as any of their permutations. We do not believe that Oi! is necessarily a racist form of music, nor do we want to cease coverage of Oi! in* Maximum Rocknroll. *However, Turbo's repeated refusal to confront far-right and neo-Nazi Oi! is out of line with the politics of not just* Maximum Rocknroll *the magazine, but also the great majority, if not all, of the individuals most closely involved with the magazine's production. His presence at NYC Oi! Fest and his subsequent praise of the festival and the racist bands who played it are disgusting to us. Some may argue that Turbo's presence at the show doesn't indicate that he condones Nazism or is a racist. Regardless of his intentions or his politics, his attendance at the show as a participant indicates a moral gulf that cannot be bridged and shows a level of comfort with white supremacy and far right politics that we cannot accept. Any comfort or acceptance of artists espousing white supremacy and nationalism will only lead to the normalization of violence against POC and anyone else deemed unacceptable by those ideologies. Accordingly, we cannot let Turbo continue as our Oi! columnist because we do not believe that nationalism in Oi! should be given a platform.*

—Joan DeToro & Miranda Fisher

Dear *MRR*,

Something that has been coming up in the news recently is the trend of student protests to gun violence. I am a high school student and am hopeful that you may find my perspective on this issue...interesting?

Today is March 20, making it exactly one week since thousands of students walked out of school to protest against gun violence.

This movement was provoked by the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, which happened on February 14 and killed 17 students and staff. Stoneman Douglas is in Parkland, Florida, and neither I nor my fellow classmates knew any of the victims. However the incident resonated strongly with almost all of us as students and as American citizens.

In many schools students who walked out in protest would face suspension simply for exercising their rights as Americans and for standing up for what they believe in.

I am in the tenth grade at a school in New York City, and students who walked out faced no consequences. Almost all of the students left the building for the seventeen minute protest (one minute for each victim). Before we left, we had to write about why we were choosing to walk out. I said that we need to put an end to these tragedies that could easily be prevented by putting practical laws in place to restrict gun ownership. Other students said that they want to feel safe in school or that they believed it was their job to stand up for the Florida students that had been killed.

Either way, we all agreed that it was finally time for us to make a stand against the politicians who continued to allow these things to happen by taking donations from the NRA and by refusing to pass gun control laws.

By the hundreds we marched around Union Square, Manhattan, chanting and holding signs, which read things such as "Protect me, not guns" and "How many more of us have to die?"

I was very wrapped up with the crowd and the excitement, but I turned around and saw two children behind me. They couldn't have been more than seven years old, and they carried together a sheet of posterboard that said in their shaky, messy, childish handwriting "Arms are for hugging." I was struck silent. And it fell upon me just what a world this was. Children should not be protesting in the streets for their right to safety.

If that entire experience with protesting and seeing these children with their sign and their somber faces gave me anything, it is that I have reached a turning point in my role as a citizen and in my view of America.

Being in high school in one of the most liberal cities in the world, it was not uncommon for me to hear people say "I hate America" or complain about the country in one way or another. I was raised in a house where that sort of thing was unacceptable to say. My family came to America to escape poverty and genocide. This economic system has provided us with all that we could ever need. For a long time I thought complainers were just unappreciative of everything they had. I loved America.

Now, I don't hate it. I am not ungrateful for the things that I have. But it pains me to say that I am no longer able to trust the government.

The second amendment was written at a time when guns were not capable of such mass destruction. As society has progressed, every other law that has become outdated has been changed. The government progresses with the times. But the second amendment hasn't been changed because so many people in Washington are willing to get paid off to vote against change. They take the responsibility that their voters have given them and completely disregard it, choosing instead to use their power to fill their own pockets. The cost of this is innocent people's lives! They do not care about the lives of their students! I mean nothing to the government. My family means nothing to the government. My teachers, my peers, my neighbors, everyone I see on the street—they mean nothing to the government! We're just numbers, statistics. They only want us as blank minds to color with their lustrous lies, so people can give them power and they can fill up their pockets however they want.

How can people who think and feel and, most importantly, *act* in these ways be human? Ready to give another dozen lives up, so they can use the payoff from the NRA to buy a new yacht, or even worse, use the money for a reelection campaign! This is why I have lost my trust and faith in the government.

These words may sound like they are written by an eccentric anarchist, but I encourage you to think about them.

I would also like to add a more positive note. Although we are living in a country where children must march out of school and protest and fight for their own safety, we are also living in a country where students and children are up for the challenge. This generation has already made its voice heard, and we don't even have the power to vote yet. By the next election, many of my friends will be casting their ballots. And though we have been forced into the political world so young, we are here to make change. The young people today are informed and strong-willed. We will continue to fight for progress, and, to the best of our abilities, try to make things right for a better future and a better America.

—Anonymous

We at MRR are deeply sorry about the deaths of the students and faculty at Parkland High, and have been watching with sadness as many people such as yourself are forced to confront the harshness of our world. The massacre at Parkland High and the government's heinous reaction to it have served as a catalyst for the radicalization of many youth throughout the US. More and more people such as yourself are awakening to the broader arguments around gun control, and I hope that you use this opportunity to explore the ways the US government betrays its own people through gun violence.

I urge you to investigate Black-led protests against gun violence. For years Black people have been fighting for gun control by arguing for the demilitarization of police. For years now Black organizers have been drawing the public's attention to the deaths of many Black people through state-sanctioned gun violence. People such as Michael Brown, Alton Sterling, and Philando Castile were murdered by police officers using their guns. The officers who killed these men (all of whom were found not guilty in court) believed that they could serve as judge, jury, and executioner of these men because of the power they hold over others. This is an ongoing problem—on March 18th of this year, Stephon Clark was shot eight times by Sacramento police because they believed he was holding a gun. Clark was unarmed. These are just some of many examples of guns being used by the police against people who hadn't even been arrested for any crime. Just like the people who lost their lives at Parkland High, these people did not deserve to die. Because of these instances surrounding gun violence, Black parents frequently warn their children to be cautious around police, and many remain fearful that their children will be targeted by the police simply because of the color of their skin.

No civilian should have to fear for their own life, nor should any civilian be shot merely for existing. I cannot think of a more terrifying way to die than staring down a barrel of a gun, so I for one applaud your efforts to protest gun violence. I just hope that the enthusiastic energy that has gone into the recent protests about gun violence can join up with the Black-led protests about police violence as well.

—Joan DeToro

CONTRIBUTE TO MRR

In addition to scene reports, guest columns, and interviews, we're looking for a few specific contributions:

We want some new columnists to write about Hardcore with a capital H, Oi! DIY metal and garage rock, as well as regular columnists from South and Central America, the UK, and Southeast Asia. For consideration, send a sample column and a list of three topics you'd cover in future columns.

FILM AND PHOTO ISSUE

We're accepting submissions for our next special issue. Photographers, send five of your best images for consideration. Filmmakers, let us know what you're working on! We'll get in touch with the best submissions in order to develop features.

ABORTION ON DEMAND WITHOUT APOLOGY

Have you been involved in organizing around abortion-related legislation where you live? Do you have an abortion story (positive or negative!) that you'd like to share? Do you want to be a part of normalizing conversations around access to reproductive rights? We're planning a special feature. Contact us if you'd like to contribute.

SEX WORK IS REAL WORK

We're collecting perspectives from sex workers around the world for an on-going series of guest columns, 1000–2000 words in length. Discretion guaranteed.

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COLUMNS

futures and pasts
*erika elizabeth

Portland underground art-punks RANDY AND THE RANDIES formed in 1979 and featured founding NEO BOYS guitarist Jennifer Lobianco in their original line-up, but the fact that they never released any proper recordings before their split in 1982 has meant that most traces of the group's history have been primarily relegated to the digital simulacra of photocopied flyers from shows in the late '70s and early '80s, with their name mentioned alongside some of their more well-remembered local peers. A brand new anthology simply titled *12" Vinyl LP* finally gives RANDY AND THE RANDIES the proper documentation that they deserve, pulling together a handful of live tracks recorded across 1980 and 1981 with a series of 8-track recordings conceived as the soundtrack to the fictional film called *Beauty* and then exhibited as an audiovisual installation with storyboarded photographs at the Portland Center for the Visual Arts in 1982. The collection starts with the group's two earliest songs, the Lobianco-fronted "Bloating" and "Solar Myth," which both mirror the raw beauty of the NEO BOYS' sparse, shambolic jangle and obliquely poetic lyrics. Lobianco relocated to Los Angeles in 1980 and the boys of the RANDIES continued on without her, channeling the off-kilter primitivist skronk of fellow American DIY oddballs like HALF JAPANESE on "Tangled Nico" and the nearly-No Wave sonic collapse of "Big Blue Blade Car," rounding out the remaining live takes. The LP's second side is devoted to the songs written for *Beauty*, where RANDY AND THE RANDIES alternate between instrumental sound collages and single-song experiments in recreating various subgenre aesthetics—there's a quick, thrashy hardcore track, a droning piece of dubbed-out mutant disco, a moody and chorus-saturated New Wave pop song, etc. A really wonderful documentation of a too-often overlooked part of Portland's punk history, and if it were my call, everyone with a WIPERS T-shirt in their closet would be required to own this record. (Randiful Music, randyandtherandies.bandcamp.com)

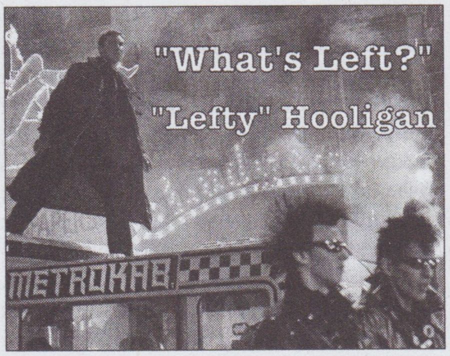
Steve Krakow of PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE SOUND and the *Galactic Zoo Dossier* was allegedly in a Chicago secondhand store years ago when he found a cryptic homemade cassette by a mid-'80s Pennsylvania group called IN TIME, which turned out to be chock full of scrappy, psych-inflected, DIY racket that sounded as if it had been recorded by Nikki Sudden and Dan Treacy while in seclusion in suburban Philadelphia. Krakow flipped out over it and managed to locate one of the members of IN TIME, in a series of events which ultimately led to the *Inside Your Mind* LP that came out late last year, collecting the songs from the thrift store-sourced tape along with some previously unreleased tracks. Maybe that whole backstory is true, or maybe it's all an elaborate hoax (see: that "lost" MICK TROUBLE EP that surfaced last year), but if it is just a put-on, the attention to detail here is truly astonishing. Everything is cloaked in tape hiss and treble, the drums have that perfect basement-bashed cardboard box clatter, the guitar parts twist from jangly technicolor pop to severe, wiry, post-punk fits, and the vocals manage to be charmingly off-key even when they're talk-shouted in a Brit-accented deadpan that you wouldn't really expect from a band supposedly from the outskirts of Philly. The Paisley Underground scene was thrown around as a reference point here, but IN TIME's psychedelic leanings really owe more to the buttoned-up mod edge and pop art romanticism of the TELEVISION PERSONALITIES than any BYRDS-worshipping, post-*Nuggets* Californian garage jangle, with tracks like ”Many are the Tears" and "When I Change My Eyes" capturing the same balance between wide-eyed melodic wonder and darkly serious tension that made the TVPs so brilliant in their prime. Then there's the art-punk sneer running through "Economic Injustices" and "On the Telephone" descended from the wobbly UK DIY template of SWELL MAPS or the DESPERATE BICYCLES, while the droning mostly-instrumental "Mideastifcation" sounds like IN TIME had some serious fantasies about traveling to where the pyramid meets the eye with the 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS. Sham or not, the narrative surrounding this LP is utterly irrelevant because it stacks up with pretty much any actual outsider post-punk classic from the early '80s. (Mental Experience, guerssenrecords.bandcamp.com)

Charlotte Mermoud's one-woman post-punk outfit (and MARAUDEUR spin-off) PURPUR SPYTT is back with a new four-track EP called *Nitpick*, on which she continues the process of subtracting elements from her songs until just the most minimal structure is left, threatening to collapse at any moment like a precarious structure of Jenga blocks. Vocals are recited with a flat emotional detachment bordering on spoken word, bass lines throb in repetitive and circular patterns, and a tinny and slightly off-beat drum machine rattles and clangs in the background, sometimes accompanied by brief flashes of sparse, single-note guitar cutting through the negative space. The austere, bass-centered rhythms of "Triangles" and "A Fake Vision of Me" suggest a downbeat bedroom interpretation of LIZZY MERCIER DESCLOUX's fiery disco-punk grooves, while "Real / Not Real" lurks in the darkened shadows of early '80s Euro coldwave with subtle synth whirrs underscoring the mentronomic bass / drum pulse. A femme-led New Neue Deutsche Welle taking shape in 2018? I'm all for it. And heads up tape enthusiasts, because if you missed out on the really excellent MARAUDEUR / PURPUR SPYTT split 10" from 2016, the PURPUR SPYTT side is included on Vacant Stare's cassette edition of *Nitpick*—don't sleep this time.

(Les Syndicats des Scorpions / Kakakids / Pouet Schallplaten, lesyndicatdesscorpions.bandcamp.com)

Following the precedent of their post-millennium compatriots in bands like the SUBURBAN HOMES, STRUCTURE, and SARCASM, PRIVATE SECTOR are yet another contemporary combo whose collective glances are fixed backwards at the '78-'81 golden era of dole-line post-punk and UK DIY—if there's not at least one person in this bunch sporting a MEKONS badge on their parka, I'll be amazed. On their new *Cost* *of Living* EP, PRIVATE SECTOR make their allegiances to that particular scritch-scratch *Messthetics* aesthetic plainly obvious, from the recurring lyrical critiques of capitalist / consumerist drudgery to the great, falling apart cover of "Disco Pope" by teenage Rough Trade rabble-rousers the PRATS. The clear PRIVATE SECTOR anthem here is the blown-out, factory floor punk drone of "Survival (Is Killing Me)," which runs through a list of the dead-end ruts and mindless aspirations of modern society (small talk with colleagues, working out, dieting, domestic bliss, careers, so on and so forth) in tandem with the song's title repeated endlessly in a resigned dual-vocal monotone, like a conceptual successor to GANG OF FOUR's "At Home He's a Tourist" stripped of any angular funk edge. Highly appropriate sounds for our current cultural and political hell-world. (Byllepest Distro, byllepestdistroofficial.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.



"Enjoy only 2 cosmetics, enough sleep & Dr. Bronner's 'Magic Soap' to clean body-mind-soul-spirit instantly uniting One! All-One! Absolute cleanliness is Godliness! [...] *For who else but God gave man this sensuous passion, Love that can spark mere dust to life! Revealing beauty in our Eternal Father's fashion, poetry, uniting All-One, all brave, all life! Who else but God! Who else!"*

—snippets from label for 32 oz. bottle of Dr. Bronner's Supermild 18-in-1 Baby-Castile Soap

We wanted to communalize our politics, our friendships, our minds. We were five anarchists who, having read Murray Bookchin's *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, decided we were an affinity group that wanted to take matters to the next level. We drove into Los Padres National Park and hiked a day into the Sespe Wilderness. Our plan was to camp, fast for three days, and then drop mescaline together. It was 1971, and even back then real mescaline was rare. It was probably LSD. It wasn't just the times; we were a little nuts.

One of our company had to hike right back out due to medical issues, but the rest of us stayed bivouacked in a grove of shady trees near an icy mountain creek while we drank only water and avoided doing much else. The collective psychedelic trip was typical. Ego death. Oneness with all things. Direct communication with the collective unconsciousness and group mind. Seeing without eyes, talking without speech, traveling without the body. Becoming one with the transcendent. Oh yes, and lots of brilliant colors and mystical patterns. I never hallucinated independent visuals, but the drug made the unmediated *kairos* pushy, fiery, as if electricity raced through my veins. Much of what I felt was familiar thanks to a non-drug spiritual experience I'd had a couple years before. After what we considered were profound revelations culminating in collective consciousness, we broke our fast with Dinty Moore Beef Stew over a sparkling campfire in a percolating night. The next morning, we hiked back out.

Experimenting with drug-induced group mind was all the rage in the day, from the Trips Festivals of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters to the Weather Underground's acid-fueled criticism sessions. But the unmediated all-one spiritual experience of various New Age religions and communalist cults was just as prominent. Harvard professor, LSD guru, and psychedelic pioneer Richard Alpert believed it was possible to achieve the psychedelic moment without drugs, through spiritual means, and he wrote a famous book *Be Here Now* as Baba Ram Dass about the possibility of staying all-one all the time without the benefit of LSD. Even Dr. Bronner promoted the all-one mystical experience through his magic castile soap.

Beat poet and anarchist Kenneth Rexroth wrote a book, *Communalism: From Its Origins to the Twentieth Century*, which circulated in manuscript form before being published in 1974. In it he laid out various examples of the libertarian communal tradition. For the pre-modern era he covered the neolithic village, early religious communities like the Essenes and early Church monasticism, the beginnings of open class warfare in various rural rebellions and peasant wars, and the apocalyptic / millenarian / quasi-communist religious movements of Münster, the Anabaptists, and the Diggers. The Russian peasant commune, early American utopian communes, and the beginnings of overt anarchist and communist political experiments completed his survey of the modern era. Rexroth nicely linked up the spiritual and political roots of communalism, and it wouldn't take much to extend his analysis to the insurrectionary / communizing politics of today's anarchist / left communist milieu.

This will be yet another essay critiquing Leftist practice and politics, except what I'll be talking about are the promises and problems of what might be called the propitious communizing moment. Whether the experience is political, spiritual, or drug-induced, this is one polarity of the human experience that has been around for a long time, perhaps as long as there have been humans. I hate to use words like "trans-historical" or "human nature" because, first and last, humans are social beings. And to argue that such unmediated communizing moments are merely the product of human biochemistry is misdirected because all human experience is biochemically based. But what of the insistence that any such experience be made universal, all-encompassing, and 24/7?

Perhaps my most disturbing moment came when I once scored weed from a hippie house where the goal was to remain dosed on acid morning, noon, and night. They kept a bottle of non-chlorinated mineral water laced with LSD in the refrigerator and everyone drank from it throughout the day. The memory of the tranced-out zombie residents haunts me still. I remember both Ken Kesey and Wavy Gravy talking about the gaping holes in their memories where data and recollection simply disappeared from prolonged acid use, a black hole, a dark star, the "smokin' holes where my memory used to be" in "the train wreck of the mind."

I occasionally sit zazen at the San Francisco Soto Zen Center. Communally organized and hierarchically structured, the goal is to remain present here and now at all times even while profound incidents of immanence and transcendence are considered rare. Everyday mindfulness as opposed to perpetual nirvana. That the highly organized communalism of such spiritual institutions often degenerates into Kool-Aid cults organized by and around crazed gurus bent on mass murder or collective suicide is not at all surprising.

Which brings us back to politics. The demand in the the '60s was not only for permanent revolution but *revolution now*. Raoul Vaneigem and the Situationists talked of the "revolution of everyday life" and Daniel Cohn-Bendit argued that "the reason to be a revolutionary in our time is that it's a better way to live." The manifesto for libertarian communism, however, was Bookchin's *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. And his post-scarcity, post-industrial, post-Marxist anarchist communism was nothing if not utopian. He proposed decentralized, autonomous communes where divisions between theory and practice, freedom and necessity, individual and collective, town and country, industry and agriculture, nature and humanity, technology and ecology are merged into a revolutionary synthesis, an unmediated totality, a political all-one. From the decentralized communism of self-contained communes, Bookchin's social ecology eventually broke with post-scarcity anarchism for a more practical, communalist libertarian muncipalism based on democratic citizens' assemblies in towns, cities, and urban neighborhoods linked by regional democratic confederalism. That in turn has become the basis for the revolutionary Kurdish politics in Rojava.

I understood early on that daily psychedelic use was not advisable, but it took me longer to realize I preferred workaday mindfulness to everlasting nirvana, or practical libertarian municipalism to utopian post-scarcity anarchism. I would rather my propitious, unmediated communizing moments be less awe-inspiring and all-encompassing. I've mentioned the tendency in such spiritual experiences to degrade into authoritarian cults of personality with a propensity for murder and mayhem. Consider that the politics in question also have an affinity with fascism's unmediated collectivism. To the old Soviet precept about the politicization of aesthetics, where art is subordinated to politics *à la* socialist realism, Walter Benjamin contended that the key element to Fascist regimes is the aestheticization of politics. Life and politics are conceived of as innately artistic, to be structured as an art form, and thus imbued with eternal spectacle. In turn, Fascism's utopian fantasies are of an unmediated poetic space where direct communication is the howl of the dog that goes silent. Life, politics, and art can only be redeemed from fascist degeneration, according to Benjamin, by making them truly dialectical, a concrete form of praxis.

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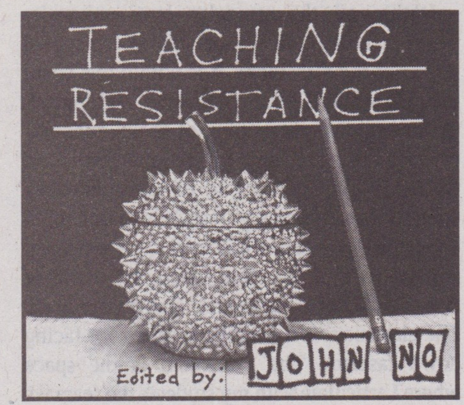


This month's Teaching Resistance is written by ***dwayne dixon****, the writer of the zine* Astronaut Etiquette*. He is an anthropology professor at University of North Carolina, where he is widely noted for his powerful, conversational, student-centered teaching practice. dixon is also an active member of Redneck Revolt (https://www.redneckrevolt.org/), an anti-racist, anti-fascist, community defense formation that advocates for broad working-class solidarity and very explicit rejection of structural racism / white supremacy.*

Redneck Revolt is well-known for having many members who arrive openly armed to protests. This strategy has proven extremely effective in shitstorms like the fascist "Unite The Right" rally in Charlottesville on August 12th, 2017, the largest convergence of far-right and white nationalist / white supremacist organizations in recent US history. In the evening before the main rally, over 300 torch-wielding white supremacists marched across the University of Virginia campus to Confederate statues and then to St. Paul's Memorial Church, where a community prayer meeting to resist racism was being led by Dr. Cornel West and local faith leaders. A relatively small number of armed Redneck Revolt members (including dixon) provided a community defense bulwark against this violent mob of white supremacists (who had already committed several acts of violence that night), protecting groups of unarmed churchgoers from violence, helping them to their cars, and generally serving as security; leading West to later remark that without the antifascists' help at that moment they could have been "crushed like cockroaches."

Two days after the "Unite The Right" rally (which culminated in the murder of Heather Heyer by a fascist who plowed his car into a crowd of people), the people of Durham helped with a nighttime takedown of the Confederate statue in front of the Durham Courthouse on August 14th. On the 18th, eleven people who had been arrested over that action were scheduled to be arraigned in court, and almost 2,000 people showed up in support and in response to a rumored KKK rally. The "Durham Freedom Fighters" bloc, of which dixon is a member, came armed to help with community defense in the event that KKK members brought violence. In the aftermath, dixon was arrested, along with two comrades, and charged with two charges related to the (fully-permitted) open-carry weapon he brought with him that day. After a months-long legal battle and trial, he was fully acquitted of all charges in late February, 2018. He urges support for the Durham folks still facing trial for bringing down the Confederate memorial (see doitlikeDurham.org for updates and how to support).

dwayne dixon is writing today on some of the many challenges and joys of teaching in the context he does at this point in history. He can be contacted at ***dedixon@email.unc.edu****, and a full account from dixon on his trial can be found here: itsgoingdown.org/defend-durham-anti-klan-resistance-trial-victory/*

From These Classroom Windows We Can See the Confederacy

The white supremacist memorial to the Confederate soldiers enlisted from the student population of the University of North Carolina was dedicated on June 3rd, 1913 by Confederate Army veteran Julian Carr. In his dedication speech he famously boasted of "horse-whipp(ing) a negro wench until her skirts hung in shreds" only two months after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox and just a hundred yards from the statue's present place of honor on the UNC campus. "Silent Sam," as the statue of the soldier is known, was yet another symbol intended to dominate public space with the official, monumentalized power of resurgent white supremacy, sanctioned and enforced through local segregationist laws collectively known as "Jim Crow." The monument was dedicated the very year President Wilson would institutionalize white supremacy even further by segregating all federal offices and workplaces. The bronze soldier, towering over the green space between grand academic buildings, cocked rifle in his hand, continued the violent work of maintaining white power initially undertaken by the Confederate veterans who returned defeated but determined to preserve a brutal racial social order. In his speech, Julian Carr explicitly connected the statue to the Confederate soldiers who, "during the four years immediately succeeding the war" through "their courage and steadfastness saved the very life of the Anglo-Saxon race in the South." The statue is a testament to this racist violence in "saving" the white race and a mute sentry watching over public space with the dead eyes of the slavers' foot soldiers.

From our classroom on the second floor of Graham Memorial Hall, my undergraduate students and I can clearly see Silent Sam, erect and permanent as ever, being watched over by an endless rotation of (almost exclusively white) campus and Chapel Hill police. The serial ironies are not lost on us, of police protecting property which is in itself a celebration of white men fighting to preserve their property in the form of humans—slaves. Throughout class my gaze drifts out upon the unmoving, intractable statue amidst a shifting, frenetic moment when the white supremacy it commemorates and assures sees its foot soldiers violently attempting to take over public space in real, physical ways. From the streets of Berkeley to Charlottesville to Gainesville to East Lansing, anti-fascists have turned back neo-Nazis and Klansmen and denied their leaders the possibility of claiming space—ideological and embodied—as theirs.

In over twenty years of various forms of teaching, I have always struggled to ensure classrooms are bastions of anti-racist refusal and active resistance to colonial, capitalist, patriarchal white supremacy. But never has that struggle been more visibly immediate and close, just a glance out the window. And so too has the classroom never seemed so important.

On February 16th I received an email threatening that the offices of my department would be protested by Identity Europa unless I and other "subversives" were "investigated," largely for the assumed danger of teaching Marxism. The email concluded by saying: "Enough is enough...we will confront the students to make sure they are aware of the brainwashing and lies being forced on them by your institution."

Critics of academia would generally agree that American institutions of higher learning have become debt traps for students as tuition rises, especially at private schools, while the work of actually teaching falls increasingly on contingent or precarious labor—contract instructors or adjuncts, who compose 66.5% of the workforce with nearly none, if any, of the protections afforded tenure-track faculty. Rather than being brainwashed by disciples of Karl Marx, it would seem that many people in the university classroom are being soaked by neoliberal capitalism. Graduate students and adjuncts across the country are unionizing and striking. The capitalist exploitation of education and its labor is being confronted simultaneously with the exposure of universities colluding with white supremacy—from cowardly administrators giving "white identitarians"—Nazis—public venues, to Chancellor Folt of UNC refusing to remove Silent Sam.

Within all the struggles over university space, it is important to recognize the spatial power of the classroom. It is within this small location where I ask my students, and myself, to undertake a reimagining of social relations, of continuing the task of creating the world we desire, and refusing to be constrained by coercive mechanisms of fear. It is in this room where debt is incurred and low wages eked out. But this is also the room where the world as it is can become unmoored and destabilized. The classroom is a singular location for facing down fascism. The classroom is the space where I articulate with my students the fears we share and begin to unravel them. It is this act of dismantling fear, that fuel of fascism, that makes the classroom such a dangerous place to the far right. I and other faculty are being targeted for our political positions and activism, particularly because of the volatility of the classroom itself. We are assumed to be putting society at risk by naming and challenging normalized power structures of white supremacy, war, exploitation, incarceration, and dehumanization. What are we saying that the students cannot already see with their own eyes? That the statue guarding the campus entrance is a soldier in a white supremacist army intent on killing to maintain a capitalist system of chattel slavery? They can see the nexus of fear standing in plain sight.

The email I received threatened that the Nazis would "confront" students. They imagined they could cause the classroom to be abandoned. They hoped to intimidate me to vacate the seminar table, to cancel the syllabus out of fear, and if I would not respond to fear, they wanted to mark me as a dangerous ideological subject, a threat in and of myself, and thus to have the university remove me. I am sure my job may be still precarious. But honestly, it always was. I never imagined that joining others in direct confrontation with fascism would earn me job security, or any security at all. Silent Sam persists as an effect of white supremacy being all too secure. But not for long, never for long.

Because in the classroom we plot out new paths for ourselves, some alone, some together: through mutual recognition of the queer struggle, the refugee struggle, the Black struggle, the immigrant struggle, the femme struggle, the impoverished struggle, the depression struggle. The classroom is the redoubt of enacting the possible and sharing stories. I speak directly about what I am and what I am doing: my solidarity with comrades who pulled down the Confederate statue in Durham, my anarchist ethics, my appearances before the court to face charges for carrying a rifle against the KKK, my subsequent trial. I ask my students to help me to restructure the demands of the university into collectively created projects where autonomy of action is privileged and shared labor is prized. We begin to change things, to destabilize the order of the world, to reject the status quo, to build relations anew through experimentation and collaboration and trust. In solidarity with one another and in deep belief of one another's struggles and experiences.

These last eight months have been the most intense of my life, and the classroom has been a consistent space where I have practiced my ethics and politics. Rather than becoming timid or uncertain, I inhabit the classroom as antifascist action itself, a zone of bold expression and unfettered intellectual provocations. As one student wrote, "the deconstructing can never be done." She points out what we all comprehend: even when the last Confederate statue is pulled down, the work persists and the courage to continue it comes from among us, inside spaces we create, like classrooms saturated in radical love.

This time is fraught with failing institutions and distrust. It is exactly in the dangerous, perhaps frightening fissures opening up that we can insist on playfulness and non-hierarchical games enjoyed in the shadow of faltering systems. Classrooms are our theaters and pageants for new ways of being, released from fear, shaped through intentional equality and justice.

It is a time for public courage. I endeavor to always renounce aloud the fear and complicity demanded by Silent Sam and the white supremacist system that keeps him there. We are all being transformed and revealed in this crucible of struggle and I find myself more honest now when I walk through the door to face my students, more of myself in ways I never imagined. For those of us who teach, it is a time of great responsibility to fight back, to liberate our classrooms, and to risk ourselves. It is a time to lose our fear completely. There is less of yesterday to cling to, and yet, more to give, more to be received. Nothing to lose.

—dwayne dixon

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers / educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education, particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com

—John No, Teaching Resistance editor

MOM, LOOK, I'M IN A MAGAZINE!!
GUEST COLUMN
SEX PISTOLS
A
B
C

Band Drama

This column is dedicated to anyone in a band that is afraid for the future and nervous that it might all end.

One of the bands that I'm in right now just got some huge news that could very well break us up if we don't handle it correctly. We've been forming for about six years, in that we still haven't ever really solidified what we're trying to do. After all this time it finally started to make sense when we found our vocalist. What she brought when she joined the band was her own voice and insight, but she also validated us enough that we didn't feel the need to push so hard.

And now she's moving. And now we're alone, again.

The band started with my friend, we'll call him "Julian," and me. We were both new to the city and were both in such a creative headspace that we'd bring literally two or three new song ideas with us each time we'd meet up. We did this for about 22 months, never able to find any other members, but still churning out riffs, structures, words, names, images, and everything else that a full band produces. We were ready before anyone else was, and it was really frustrating to be held back by lack of resources. After hunting, auditioning, rejecting and being rejected, we finally found our drummer, "Bill." He had a rehearsal studio room and top notch gear, so we moved in and got to work really quickly. We created at the speed of inspiration and never compromised, but we seemed to keep trying to outdo each other. We were very open minded stylistically, but that also hurt us because we were basically all over the place. We didn't have a singular voice or a singular image. The only reputation that we had is that at shows no one wanted to play after us because we were so overwhelming. Very loud, very fast, very dense, and it kept getting worse. Because we had no inhibitions, we had no reins, and we completely exploded whenever we got the opportunity to play. I knew it was bad when I wrote a very simple and stable punk song that I was calling our "Morrissey Song" because was was emotional and calming, and sounded like something Morrissey would like. I wanted to bring us back down to earth with it. I brought it to Julian and Bill, and by the end of the rehearsal it was by far the fastest and most intense song we'd ever created. That was the moment when I knew we needed to find an outsider that would force us to recognize our limit so that we'd stop doing this to each other.

Bill met "Gigi" randomly playing pool. She respected our mutual music tastes, but she herself made her own blend of atmospheric, darkwave, post-punk as her solo project. For whatever reason, she was interested and willing to collaborate with us. She was the perfect antidote to our scatterbrained thrashings, and we calmed down immediately. I think we felt like everything was more valid coming out of her mouth. She had a smokey Siouxsie tone but could still scream when she felt it. We watched her command the room with confidence, and she didn't need to raise her voice to be heard. Because of this we were able to calm down and be more calculated with our output. It came out as a blend of horror punk / hardcore mixed with ethereal post-punk that culminated into climatic death rock. It wasn't necessarily less intense, but definitely more focused so that the speed and intensity that we did bring landed more cleanly. She absolutely was the huge element that we had been missing.

And now she's moving. As I'm writing this I'm realizing that I'm probably sensationalizing her because it's still fresh and we'll be incomplete again soon. But will we really be all the way back to square one? I think that kind of thinking will be the thing that keeps us down. The most important thing right now is to grieve but not lose momentum. We should be proud of what the four of us accomplished, and recognize that the remaining three of us deserve the same pride from our accomplishments. We were directionless, but now we know what aesthetic and approach we need to function. That said, I think it will be best to start looking for a replacement immediately. As difficult as it is to feel strong at this point, it's important to be picky. We now know what we want musically, but just as importantly we now know what we need for our relationship dynamic. The thing that made us know right away that Gigi was going to be perfect was her confident creativity and fresh perspective. I was so drawn to how well her approach challenged us in the right way. Therefore, I don't want us to find a carbon copy of Gigi in anyway. I want to find someone with a *new* fresh perspective that will challenge us all over again. I want them to bring their own personality and treat this band as a vehicle to try their own inspirations. I want them to have the confidence to take the reigns, and never question if they're "fitting in" to what we made in the past. I think that's the only way to grow out of all of this. It's the same as if you were to get out of a huge relationship and then try to find someone exactly like your ex. That would be unhealthy and you'd end up holding them to those same standards, constantly comparing the two and not giving the current relationship air to breathe. Instead it's important to be open and find something completely brand new.

I can't stress enough all that Gigi has given to us, and for that what she brought is irreplaceable in every sense of the word. That's why we're not replacing *her*. We're respecting her time in the band by allowing it to be preserved, and in doing so forging ahead. That gives me hope, and honestly we need that right now. It's the only way to move on. Thank you Gigi, and seriously best of luck. Don't worry about us, we'll be fine. I think.

— Michael De Toffoli

OVERAMPED
HARM REDUCTION FOR THE MODERN WORLD

In the third and final issue of the HIV miniseries, I'm talking to my friend Dalila about what it's like to live with HIV. Dalila contracted HIV in the early '90s, but her diagnosis was kept secret from her for several years. She didn't find out that she was living with HIV until the tragic death of her eight-month-old baby due to AIDS. Dalila was kind enough to sit down with me to talk about living with HIV in Kenya, in America, and as an advocate in both countries.

MRR: Can you introduce yourself?
Dalila: Well, my name is Dalila, from Kenya. I am a mother, my son is sixteen years old. I've been in the US for the past ten years now.

MRR: OK, so what made you come to the US ten years ago?
Dalila: I was invited to an exchange program by one of the HIV agencies. It was a three week exchange program because of my work that I did in Kenya, I worked with an HIV organization, so I came to share what we were doing there and to compare with what was going on here in Boston.

MRR: And when did you start doing HIV advocacy work in Kenya?
Dalila: In 2003. I remember it was November,

2003. I had just lost a job with another organization where we had been funded to take care of those who survived the terrorist attack [US Embassy attack, Nairobi]. So the funding got finished—it was a contract—and I saw this job advertisement in the newspaper for an HIV / AIDS organization looking for an office assistant and being HIV positive was an added advantage. I was very excited, and out of eleven people I became number one.

MRR: And the rest is history?
Dalila: [*laughter*] Yes, the rest is history. Actually, I'm proud to be part of the organization because we built the network. We started the network by visiting people in the community to introduce the network.

MRR: What do you mean, introduce the network?
Dalila: It was called The Network of People Living with HIV / AIDS in Kenya. But for us to get it working we had to bring people in. So we went out in the community to tell them what we were all about, what we were doing, and to sign them up. I ended up registering over 300 organizations by the time I left the organization. I was in charge of the data.

MRR: That's a ton of organizations. So, when did you get diagnosed with HIV?
Dalila: 1992.

MRR: How old were you?
Dalila: Maybe it was 1991. I think I was 20, 21? I'm not good at math [*laughter*]. I was 20-something.

MRR: Do you remember what you were thinking or feeling when you found out your diagnosis?
Dalila: My diagnosis is quite different from how people do it now because I was under the care of a relative, and I got sick. She took me to a doctor, and the doctor recommended some tests to be done on me. I think I had an STD and on top of that he wanted me to have an HIV test too, except I was not told. Those days, culturally...like, you're my elder cousin, I'm under you, so some things that you do you may not tell me. So me, I just tagged along. And one day my father came to the city, I was staying with my relative in the city. And they gave him the news, "Your daughter is HIV positive."

MRR: They told him before they told you?
Dalila: Yeah.

MRR: Wow. Are you serious?
Dalila: The only thing I remember [is that] my cousin told me I was an embarrassment to the family. She said, "How could you get this big disease?" It was called the "big disease" then. There was no name, there was no way for people to say it was AIDS. And in my language, the way she put it, it was so hurtful. And I thought "Oh my God, okay. I'm going to die." And she told me "Your father is a principal, a daughter of a school principal cannot do this." She told me all that stuff. It made me feel so...[trails off]. So my father comes, he goes back home. I am told nothing but the silence in the house, it was like I had done something wrong. They started disinfecting their toilets when I used them. I washed my clothes separately. And one day when I was very, very sick, she sent me to my auntie's village, a few streets from where [my cousin] was. I think they had talked about it. Like, "This girl she has done this thing, so she she needs to go home and get treatment." I think I had caught malaria too.

MRR: You had malaria too?
Dalila: Yes, that time. So my cousin didn't treat me, she sent me to live with my aunt. And my auntie made sure I didn't stay there. They would come give me food in the bed where I was sleeping. And one day they decided to plant something in my suitcase, like I had stolen something, just to get me out of there. So my uncle kept saying, "You know what, there's no space here." And I can't even believe that this really happened, looking at all my relatives right now. I guess it was the era? So one morning they said, "We have to go through your stuff." And they found this skirt and [my aunt] said, "Oh my god this is my skirt! You're a thief, *blah blah blah*." So I had to go. And one of my cousins had loaned me a sweater because it was cold out. It was one of those fashionable sweaters. She told me, "You can keep it," like it would be infected if I wore it and gave it back to her. So I went home to my parents, I got treatment for malaria. I was immediately hospitalized. I recovered. This is 1991, right, so nobody tells me nothing. So I go on living my life.

MRR: So you still didn't know about your HIV status then?
Dalila: No. No, I knew nothing.

MRR: But your father knew?
Dalila: My parents knew, my cousins knew, and the rest of them she must have told, except me. So I lived my life until 1996, when I got pregnant with Sandra. Sandra didn't grow up like a normal baby. At six months, she was so little. She wasn't maintaining weight. She was dying. But my cousin knew, because every time she came to see me she couldn't even hold the baby. If she held the baby she could see it wasn't a happy baby.

MRR: And when you gave birth to Sandra, you still didn't know that you had HIV?
Dalila: No. No, one time my mom told me, "You know, your cousin had mentioned that you had this big disease and no matter what you do you can never have a healthy baby." So she's tricking me, she's trying to say something. But I just brushed it off. So then Sandra had to be hospitalized. And during her last few days she got skinnier and skinnier. And I could now start seeing the questions in the doctors faces and the talk like, "This baby might have AIDS." Sandra died in February, 1997. She was only eight months old.

MRR: I'm so sorry.
Dalila: Thank you. So, 1998 now, I get to Nairobi. I became a volunteer with the hospital when the terrorists attacked the embassy. I was reading an article in the paper and I said, "This wonderful lady who talks to young girls, and talks about emotion and *blah blah*." I said I must talk to her. So now that I am working in the hospital I have access to people. I looked for her, she was called Christine. I found Christine and I told her, "Listen, this is my fear. I think my baby died of HIV. I heard people talk about it. Can you help me? I need to get tested." So she introduced me to one doctor. She asked, "Do you want to see a man or a lady doctor?" I said "No women!" Because when I gave birth to Sandra, the experience I had in the district hospital, no way. So Dr. Comeau just told me that I need to take prophylaxis. So they put me on Septra.

MRR: So did you know at this point? Did anybody tell you?
Dalila: No, I was introduced to Dr. Comeau. He asked for tests and I was given the instructions to go to the lab and get tested. So they give me this [sealed] envelope. They told me, "Give this to the doctor, please don't open it." Then I knew—if they were questioning me like that, something was wrong. So this is the time now—I was tested with my cousin in 1991, and now I'm getting tested by myself in 1998. I'm still alive. I am still okay. Nothing happened except losing my baby. So Dr. Comeau told me, "You're HIV positive." Your question was "how did [I] feel?" I didn't know, I didn't have any feelings because I had been betrayed. I lost my baby, if somebody had told me, *maybe*, just maybe Sandra would have been safe. Everything went back to my baby, and I just said, "Why didn't they tell me?"

MRR: How did you find out that your family knew before you did?
Dalila: Because remember when my baby was sick and my mom said that my cousin said that I had a big disease?
MRR: Oh, okay. I understand. Looking

back on it, you figured it out.
Dalila: Yes. So I let it go. Because there, then, there was no help. There was no education. There [were] no materials for education, it was just coming up in the '90s. It was still just coming out. There was a *lot* of stigma. So the follow up for me was to keep taking my Septra to prevent any infection. But, in between, I was always sick: malaria, TB. Around this time I get to work at the African Medical Research Foundation. After the volunteer position ended, we were hired when the US funded the program. Then, I met David, he's my son's father. I got pregnant twice. I lost them. I had two miscarriages because he was a stress to me. I kept telling David, "Let's go have ourselves tested." He refused. He said "If I'm positive I will sell all my property. I would drink everything." Because he was a real drunk, he was a real dog. At this point we are talking 2000. I wanted to go together to get the test because I wanted him to know. So, when I got pregnant he told me, "What? Pregnant with who?" [*laughter*] It's like you're watching Maury and I am the main actor here. His sister had warned me, his sister loved me and his family loved me. We were together almost four years. This one [David's sister] said, "I know my brother." And she knew he was bad. In fact, when I had my miscarriage she was with me in the hospital. He didn't care.

MRR: He didn't care that you had a miscarriage?
Dalila: No! No, he never cared. David never, never, cares. Even now. Anyway, he refused to get tested. And Dr. Comeau had warned me, "Please try not to get pregnant!" Because of the miscarriages he said my womb was being affected. But then I said, "No, I am keeping this pregnancy, I'm sorry, but we have to work together." And he was mad at me! But he said "Okay, what can I do?" We had a staff doctor, so I used to get Primolut injections from him.

MRR: What's that?
Dalila: Primolut strengthens the womb. So, that saved the baby. But at eight months, I had high blood pressure, so I had an emergency C-section—this was 2002 when I gave birth to Sammy. Sammy is fine. I got help from UNICEF, they were providing free formula milk. And the same Christine that I had met was still with me, she's the one who helped me to get the treatment because it was really expensive to get formula for the baby.

MRR: You were getting formula because you knew that you were positive and you didn't want the baby to be infected?
Dalila: Yes, I didn't want him to get infected from my breast milk. Because Sandra had breastfed from day one. But by then I knew it was not good for the baby, because nobody taught us before then. So, Sammy was on AZT for 8 months. He was tested in 2007 and he was found to have TB. He was treated for TB as I was being treated for TB too. But he tested HIV negative. And I started taking my medication in 2006.

MRR: Do you know what your viral load or CD4 count was then?
Dalila: My CD4 count was 150. And my viral load was always in the thousands and millions.

MRR: Wow, so your CD4 count was really low....
Dalila: Yes, because when we started taking medication in my country, in that organization, we had the buddy system where I remind you and you remind me to take the medication. There was no cell phone apps or anything like that. So my friend, Monica, I became her buddy. And when I saw the reaction [of the meds] on her skin, I said "Noooo." She reacted...the side effects were so bad.

MRR: What did it look like?
Dalila: She had a breakout. All over her body. So when it was my turn I told [Dr. Comeau] no. It was a fight. He said "It's okay. You don't have to take it. You have to be willing to take it, you have to be ready." So all this refusing got me sick until my CD4 was so low and my body was just all over the place. I had chest pains, stomach. But I said to myself, "I'm not having sex with anyone!" [Both laugh] I told the doctor "Ok, now I will take the medication." He said "No, you can't start it now because you are taking TB medication, you can't start it when you are still taking TB medication because they interact." So had I listened to my doctor the first time, maybe I wouldn't have gotten TB [opportunistic infection]. So I took that bunch of medication, I don't remember what it was called, but it didn't do well for me.

MRR: You had side effects?
Dalila: Lipodystrophy. I didn't take that medication for long because I had side effects, my boobs were big, of course now the fat distribution goes to my stomach and here [points to chest]. But at the time people used to look, men used to ogle. But it was painful! I was like, "Don't look at this, this hurts!" So they changed me to another regimen. In 2007 I was changed to Atripla and it gave me nightmares and headaches and all sorts of stuff. But then in 2008 I came [to the US] and I told the doctor I wanted to have another baby. The doctor says Atripla is not good for the baby so she put me on something else, Kaletra and Truvada, which I took until just last year. But now we have advanced medication. Truvada has affected my bones, so now I have osteoporosis.

MRR: When did you start working as a peer?
Dalila: In 2010.

MRR: And the government eliminated your position in 2017, correct?
Dalila: Yes, that's correct.

MRR: And so what keeps you here?
Dalila: Mostly the insurance. Health insurance and the opportunities of living here. Back home, we had a donor from Canada who funded our insurance at the non-profit I worked at. So my primaries and I talked about going back (to Kenya) but since I was always sick and having fundraisers to pay my hospital bills, they said, "Nah, if you can find a way to stay there you should." Because back home we had generic medication, but here I had a good doctor, I had a job. So imagine going back, knowing that you have to change medications and knowing the body reacts badly to some changes. So I don't go back because of my healthcare.

MRR: So you get name brand drugs over here and if you went back to Kenya, you would have to switch to a new regimen?
Dalila: Yeah, a new regimen or the same regimen. We really talked about this with a couple of doctors, and then we had the examples of people who have had some very bad side effects or reactions. It's not a common thing, but my fear is that I would be that very one person who had that reaction and I'm like, "What will happen to me?" I love my country [Kenya], I love the beauty, I just love it. But the US, it is very fast-paced, but the opportunities here...Like now I know I could get a job to clean somebody's house, I could get my income back. But there, there's nothing like that.

MRR: There's no job opportunities.
Dalila: There's not job opportunities. It's very rare.

MRR: Do you think if you had a job in Kenya that healthcare would still be expensive?
Dalila: Yes, it would still be expensive. And I know because before I left I had a very nice job. I had a very nice place in Mombasa. I lived near the beach. I mean, it was good. But if I went back now and got the same job, I don't know how to live back there with the current currency rates, and the economy has changed. When I go to Kenya, I fear. [*laughter*] I just fear living there now! I just admire how people live there with small amounts of money every month. How do they do it?! I need some more training. I need another culture shock.

MRR: You need, like, a reverse culture shock?
Dalila: Totally!

MRR: Well I'm glad you're still here.
Dalila: [*laughter*]

MRR: I'm wondering what you think about stigma. Do you think there is still a lot of stigma for people living with HIV in the US?
Dalila: Yes.

MRR: Do you think it's changed at all since you moved here?
Dalila: Um...just from personal experience, from people's stories, it is still there. It has changed, yes. But I can't be so accountable on quantity—how much it has changed. But, um, maybe some healthcare workers treat their patients differently. I know of a patient who told me she had gone to the emergency room and she was told, "Oh, you people, you are all drunks and users. That's how you got infected."

MRR: A doctor here in Boston told her that? That she was a drug user and that's how she got HIV?
Dalila: Yeah, so all of that is being thrown at you. [The stigma] can be indirect, but it's still there. And the people who come from outside the country, first they have self stigma. I worked in the hospital setting and worked in [support] groups, and I see people who shy away from getting healthcare because they might meet someone who is from their home country.

MRR: They don't want to run into somebody.
Dalila: Correct, they don't want to run into somebody. They don't want people to talk about them here. I knew a lady who I had to really convince that this was her life. When you are in the hospital and you are in the [infectious disease] hospital and I see Hannah and Hannah is from Kenya, I know that she is there for the same reason! So that should comfort you. Walk with your head high, go through that door, go see a doctor and go. But her doctor actually used to get her through a different entrance.

MRR: Really?
Dalila: Yeah, for a long time. Until one time she just said "Okay, I don't care." And also there's a lady that I helped with disclosing to her partner. She had been for over fourteen years with the same guy. I know she told me they used protection, but she was afraid. Everytime they were together she was afraid. So I told her, "You know what? Take your time. At least now you acknowledge that you want him to know." She did tell him but he didn't care. This had been killing her all these years. She was so shocked at his reaction, she felt she should have done this long ago. He said, "You should have told me, but I understand. So are you taking your medication?" And this lady feels so much relief right now. For me that's my pride in the work that I've done. In very little ways I have changed people's lives, from coming from a community where people have stigmatized themselves first and then they feel stigma from other people which sometimes doesn't exist. And that support group that I run came together as a family. People have grown because of it. People have had families, jobs, school. But people need just that one idea of, "It's okay. You are not alone." I'm proud of that.

MRR: You ran a group for African immigrants who are living with HIV. There were people in your group from all over Africa?
Dalila: Yeah I remember we had Ethiopia, Guinea, Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Cote D'Ivoire..I think we had like ten countries represented? Uganda, all of East Africa was there! Everyone from East Africa. Oh, Ghana too, we had one person from Ghana.

MRR: Do you still feel like there's a lot of stigma in Kenya?
Dalila: Yes, um, I don't know, but I think there is too much really going down there. With my mom, we can say anything we want. We can discuss anything. I have flyers all over the house, during one of the projects in 2000 we had a campaign with the president, so since then the flyers are still up in the house. So you can see, they overcame the judgment, my brothers overcame it. All my brothers accepted me immediately.

MRR: Did you ever confront your family about the fact that they didn't tell you about your status?
Dalila: In 2011, we had World AIDS day at BMC. I was speaking at it and I sat down somewhere and just called my cousin and I told her, "It's ok. It's long overdue, let's talk about this thing. I know now what I didn't know then and I understand how you guys must have felt, keeping this within yourselves, not knowing what to tell me and what it was. And now I am educated and I am educating other people. Can we just forgive each other and move on?" My cousin was just like, "Thank you so much! Because I don't know what I would have done without you saying this."

MRR: That must have been a big relief for you, because it sounded like she was pretty cruel at the time you were diagnosed.
Dalila: Oh yeah. So we just talked about it and I called my mom immediately and I told her I talked to my cousin. She said, "Thank you so much. That is such a relief. Nobody knew what to tell you because at the time this disease had no name. We didn't know how to say. So it's good that you talked to her." That's the way I confronted them, just by saying "let's move on." And my auntie, the one who kicked me out, the first time she saw me before I left for the US, she couldn't believe it was me! Everyone had always expected to me to be all skinny and thin and sick. One day we were at a funeral service for one of our cousins. And she asked my cousin, "Who is that over there?"

MRR: She didn't even know it was you?
Dalila: No! And I know in those days, I used to look nice.

MRR: You still look nice!
Dalila: No, back then if you look at my pictures...I'm telling you I used to dress up. She asked, "Whose daughter is that?" They expected me to just die like the way my daughter died. To just wear out. So everybody else now is sick. All of them. One person takes asthma medication, one has high blood pressure, one has—I don't even know what's what. So all of us are doing something, taking care of our bodies.

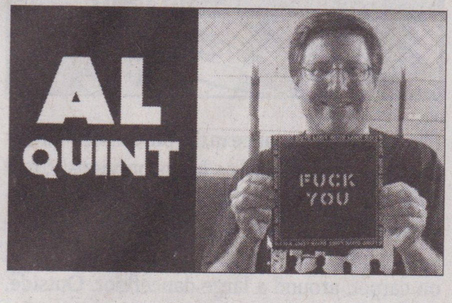
MRR: So they're all sick now too?
Dalila: Yeah.

MRR: That must feel at least a little validating...
Dalila: It does! I'm sorry, but it does. I was telling my mom just the other day when I was home. I said, "You know what? [My cousin] has asthma, and she takes medication everyday just like me. You wake up, you take your medication. But remember when I was there? I was dirty, you know? I was just an infection."

MRR: You were considered untouchable.
Dalila: Yes. And I managed to see my auntie and, God forgive me, I am not planning on anything, but I just want her to see I am still alive. I'm still there. Nothing has changed. My cousins, those ones that kicked me out. So karma just came back to every single one. Karma is a B. [*laughter*] Karma is a bad one.

MRR: Is there anything else you would want to say or want people to know about what it's like being you?
Dalila: I think it's just to learn to love yourself. Learn to give yourself what you want. Learn to do what you want. And love other people. Look at people the same way. That's what I've learned. After working with people living with HIV and seeing poverty and desperation, I started my own charity to help the vulnerable people in my village.

That's all for this month. Thanks to Dalila for spilling her guts to me and the world of MRR. Reach me @ dearauntiehazel@gmail.com if you are so inclined. Stay safe until next issue punks.



TIM YO…

It's hard to believe it's been twenty years since I got a phone call telling me that Tim Yohannan had passed away. I don't even remember who called, but it was one of those rare times when I started crying. I've written about my interactions with Tim in the past, but I'll re-tell a few of those anecdotes since it's been awhile. I stayed at *MRR* headquarters a couple of times: in March 1985, when he was living in Berkeley, and again in October 1985, when they were on Clipper St. in San Francisco. That has to have been one of the steepest hills I ever walked up. My shins still ache just thinking about it. I even got to be a shitworker when I was there, helping to pack up and ship out a new issue, which was #43. I just took the issue out and there I am, forever immortalized. Maybe "got to be" wasn't the right term. I think "drafted" might have been more appropriate. I suppose it was a fair trade for the free lodging and being able to tape a bunch of the records in the *MRR* collection. I mean record them—not actually put the legendary green tape on the record covers. That was one task I didn't get to take part in.

Tim had me on the radio show a couple of times. I have a tape of the first one and listened to it awhile back. No wonder he made fun of my Mass. accent. It was pretty bad back then. I've managed to reign it in a bit over the years, but it still slips out. The second time Tim had me on the radio show, he came up with the brilliant (devious?) idea of having me interview the Virginia band UNSEEN FORCE, even though I'd never heard their music and only knew at least one of 'em had been in WHITE CROSS. Incredibly, I managed to get through it without making a complete idiot of myself—at least I don't think I did. I had a good laugh about that when I had lunch with their former drummer Bobby Hufnell in Richmond, VA a few years ago. I remember Tim also took me over to the as-yet-unopened Gilman Street Project and had me get up on a ladder and hammer in a few boards—"now you can say you helped build this place."

Tim did give me crap about being a fan of AGNOSTIC FRONT and the FUs—I think he believed I was some kind of right-winger or at least tolerant of those elements because of the reputation of certain segments of Boston and NYC's hardcore scene. That was far from the case, though. Even back then, I knew how dumb AF's anti-welfare song "Public Assistance" was. And when my politics took a sharper turn to the left after the '94 Republican takeover of Congress and their Contract *On* America, he made a positive note of it in a letter to me just before he passed away. He was always supportive of my work over the years, something I've always appreciated.

While Tim could be dogmatic and had a narrow definition of what was or wasn't punk, his knowledge and passion always came out in his writing. Who could forget his review for DIE KREUZEN's first album—*"This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great..."* repeated nearly ad infinitum. Sure, it didn't exactly convey the musical contents, but you had to figure if it had such an enthusiastic stamp of approval, it was probably at least decent. Same for NEW BOMB TURKS' *!!Destroy-Oh-Boy!!* album. Tim's 1993 review said it was the best record of the past five years. Once again, I figured it'd at least be halfway decent, and that was an understatement. From the opening buzzsaw chords of "Born Toulouse-Lautrec," it was like all the shitty music I'd been listening to in recent years got blown away with one sonic blast. It'd take a few years before I stopped listening to god awful grunge music and warmed-over cock rock and got rid of the long hair, but it was definitely a step in the right direction. So thanks, Tim. Thanks for giving me a shot as a writer and thanks for the musical recommendations. It's time to pay the best tribute I can—put on that Turks album nice and loud…

LOUD? YES...NICE? PROBABLY NOT...

Three recent releases from the Quality Control HC label showed up here, a diverse selection of what's going on with UK hardcore, and two of the three have a more-than-decent amount of quality. BIG CHEESE's *Aggravated Mopery* 7" EP has a less-than-subtle late '80s NYHC sound, drawing from SICK OF IT ALL and LEEWAY in particular. I'm reminded of the former due to the vocal delivery and the latter from the metallic riffery that pops up here and there. The production even has the cavernousness of that era of hardcore, but it's not a detriment. Bringing back the floor-pounding Sunday matinee sound. Nicely packaged with a fold out lyric poster.

I really wish GAME's *Who Will Play* flexi had been done on vinyl—too much damned surface noise—but they're a ferocious unit. Opening track "Game" comes charging full-speed out of the gates, coupled with Ola's angry, raged-filled vocals. "Crush" threatens to stomp itself right through the floor before kicking into faster gear with a SACRILEGE inspiration, and you can hear echoes of that elsewhere. Still, GAME come down on the hardcore side of things, and it's a murderous attack. Five songs, two of them with Polish lyrics and one of them, the fast and ripping "Rząd i Osioł," provides an obliterative conclusion.

The only one of the three I'm not as enamored with is STAGES IN FAITH's *Forgiving Man.* They also look back to another era, that being melodic punk created by bands in the late '80s / early '90s on both sides of ocean whose members were rooted in hardcore or more aggressive punk but were opting for something more tuneful. And there's nothing wrong with that, as long as the songs have grit and drive. That's not really the case here. Decently-crafted but a little too poppy for my liking, especially with the vocal harmonies. (qualitycontrolhc.bigcartel.com)

Even with the paucity of good DIY venues the past few years, Boston's hardcore punk scene keeps regenerating itself in different permutations. SKINNED ALIVE fit that bill. People from CHAIN RANK, COMBAT ZONE, CONTINGENT, 2x4, BLOODKROW BUTCHER and many others playing, as you'd imagine, no-nonsense scorch. Their four song demo tape provides kick-to-the head hardcore buzz mainly in a loud / fast vein, with "Forced To Die" adding a bit of bootboy punch. (J. Damage, 12 Morton St., Somerville, MA 02145, twerpjerks@gmail.com)

San Diego band DIATRIBE's history goes back to the 1980s. Their 1985 *Aftermath* demo came out on vinyl in 2007 on the Get Revenge label and they've been an active band again in recent years, with vocalist Vince Udo the sole original member. Their new 12", *The Black Parade,* was recorded between 2012 and 2014 and is finally out, with a limited pressing of 200 copies, on splattered vinyl and with a screened cover. A blunt, rough, hardcore punk sound embracing crust, thrash, and D-beat and harnessing it to still-angry sentiments. This is all spat out in angry bursts, particularly on songs like "Fraternal Order Of Hate" and "Emblem." Three decades later, there's still a bone to pick with the world and raw musical emanations remain a suitable weapon of choice. (diatribe.freehostia.com)

A pair of new ones from Feel It Records. HAIRCUT are a Richmond, VA band who kick up a storm on their *Shutting Down* 7". No-BS, speedy hardcore punk with some early POISON IDEA in the engines. Not exuding originality—what does these days—but they keep the energy level high. It does exude a pointed lyrical outlook, both in English and Spanish. "Fucked Up" is a song about sobriety that's done without flying a "nailed to the X" straight edge flag, while "Boys Club" is about not needing acceptance from any group of people. Worth at least a few spins.

RIK & THE PIGS are a prolific band and Feel It's released their three song 7", *Blue Jean Queen*, where they're branching into a rawk'n'roll sound, without as much of the low fidelity. They've also added a saxophonist to the lineup, and it doesn't really add much to the songs. They redo "TV Bloopers" and I prefer the roughness of the original. The title track is a fired-up '70s-inspired rocker with vintage references—the Stones, Sonny & Cher, etc.—and is the best of the trio. "Off/On" is a dragged-out blooze rocker. Kind of disappointing. (www.feelitrecordshop.com)

NO BLUES' five song demo features members of Ontario hardcore ragers BORN WRONG doing a 180 into tuneful, ragtag punk territory with hooks galore. Bright, snappy compositions but there's a snarl underneath and the semi-low fidelity gives it all an edge. Pop without the pap. (blowbloodrecords.bandcamp.com)

Belfast band the NUMBER ONES' *Another Side Of The Number Ones* also operates in a power pop realm, and they're unafraid to lay on the glop a bit, i.e. it gets a little cutesy. When I say power pop, I don't mean the skinny tie variety but the kind of bands you'd hear from the UK and Ireland in the late '70s. Still, the production is rough around the edges and there's sting in "Lie To Me" and "Long Way To Go," but a little preciousness goes a long way. (www.sorrystaterecords.com)

RATS IN THE WALL, with former F-MINUS axeman Brad Logan, have been kicking around for about five or six years, with a number of releases under their belts. The latest is *Warbound*, a five song 7" that comes with a download that has a bonus track. Stomping and pounding hardcore punk that's angry and damaged-sounding. It ups the level of intensity heard on their previous recordings. I've been using the term "heartfelt punk" as an epithet, lately, to describe beefy punk with an often-corny, heart-on-sleeve style. This really *is* heartfelt punk, coming from the gut and reveling in not fitting into life's plastic molds... chafing against authority. Eva's vocals are pissed off and raspy, and I'm with her when she yells, *"and maybe our parents were right—maybe punk rock ruined my life / it's the only place I've ever belonged, my chosen family—as dysfunctional as they come."* Preach! (Programme Sounds, programmesounds.com; Indecision, indecisionrecords.com)

RAD's latest release is a four song tape, *Sacramento Is Rad +1*, that pays tribute to their Sacramento punk forebears, as well as POISON IDEA ("Cult Band," from *Pick Your King* is the "+1" selection). They tear through a pair of REBEL TRUTH songs, "Child Hosts the Parasite" and "All I Know" and one from LIZARDS, "Coke Up My Butt," with reckless, yet precise aplomb. REBEL TRUTH tend to be a bit overlooked, so it's good to see them get the recognition. Maybe RAD could cover SQUARE COOLS or TALES OF TERROR on their next Sacramento tribute. (sacrementorecords.com)

For a two-piece, the DEVILS make one hell (pun intended) of a racket and that continues for their second album *Iron Butt*. This ain't no WHITE STRIPES garbage, this is raw, nasty garage / blues / punk slop done at a healthy clip—or maybe unhealthy. Sure, there are traditional blues influences—that really comes for the slow cookin' "White Collar Wolf"—but they harness it to a wanton, high-octane fuzzed-out attack and take you for one nasty hellride. A few different wrinkles here and there, such as the numbing cacophony of "Red Grave," with an unholy rant from drummer / vocalist Erica Toraldo. To quote a quite different band, the sound of an enormous door slamming into the depths of hell. (Voodoo Rhythm, www.voodoorhythm.com)

Before wrapping up, I don't really have time to do a lengthy tribute to Mark E. Smith from the FALL, who died in February, but still wanted to mention his passing. Yes, he could be rather cantankerous, difficult and abusive, both psychologically and physically (*that's* an understatement)—he once punched up his own band on stage and ended up in the clink for his troubles. This was a few nights after a show I saw where he sang half the set from the dressing room. Not everything he did over the past 40 years has been top-notch, but even recent releases had a good song or three. And he was a true character. I'd recommend checking out his autobiography *Renegade*, which originally came out in 2008 and has been reprinted over the years. His reminiscences are often hilarious and, as you can imagine, pull no punches, especially when it comes to former bandmates. He was even a stinker in his childhood—he writes about playing a game called "Japanese Prison Camp" when he was in charge of babysitting younger siblings. Listen to "Totally Wired" or their *Live At The Witch Trials* or *Hex Enduction Hour* while reading to get the full effect.

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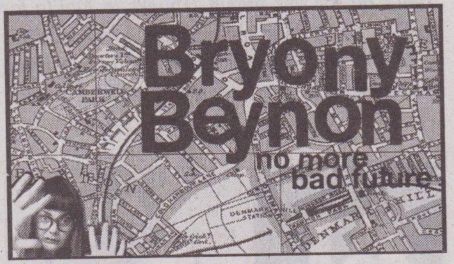

First rule is: No nuance in the pit. It is a Saturday night, which, only a few hours previously, had been a Saturday afternoon, complete with the sticky, timid malaise that an all-day gig tends to precipitate. Tables are set out cabaret-style, on carpet, around a large dancefloor. Outside, patrons sit on picnic tables around a bowling lawn because this, friends, is Australia. When night falls here, the constant heat takes on an almost supernatural quality, somehow increasing in intensity even as the sunlight drains out of the sky, suggesting it has some other subterranean source.

OILY BOYS are a Sydney band that like to cover each other with spray paint whilst pelting out a reverberating swill of curiously affirming hardcore. They have a song called "My Sex Life." We're mid-way through their tastefully short set. Everyone's coming up on their own personal trip when some absolute chancer, he of loose limbed drooping gurn, gets on stage and attempts to take a selfie with the band. A second passes and he does not vacate the stage, mouth open, scanning the crowd for friends to hype him up. A few more seconds pass and the band doesn't seem to notice. One second more and a switch is flipped; a 78 rpm response occurs. Zephyr throws a mic stand like a javelin, then Grace empties the dregs of her beer on the man's head. While some might flinch, I am only filled with warmth at this, reminded on cue that we are all siblings of chaos. Hardcore does things to even the most ethical angel. We become lesser, sure, basic bitches for a minute maybe, but distilled—never reduced. As he exits the stage, selfie-man takes this moment to ferment his humiliation and tries to stake a claim to some strange selfie-righteousness, his whole body moving in that "I thought this was a *punk* gig" outrage-meets-confusion way that I bet you can immediately visualise. Before anything further can happen he is immobilized by a few protestations and disappears. Things switch from millstone to helium as the energy from this failed routine and subsequent comeuppance seem to cycle back into the nature rhythm of pit furore, the right kind of mob justice metabolised into feedback. Maybe he will read the room next time, probably not.

Almost immediately STRAIGHTJACKET NATION take to the stage in their first appearance in this city since Emily and Dave became parents. I'm not sober enough to reflect on the yawning great passage of years since we first met, the serendipitous link up they provided me with some truly nutty farmers last year whose land we lived and worked on to fulfill visa requirements. Nor does the moment warrant some grim thoughts as to whether I too will ever mark my adulthood with any achievements beyond facilitating some okay gigs for some foreign strangers who never stay strangers again, in that strangest of ways that only punk allows for. Instead I'm just adrift in the warm whiskey heat, enjoying the colors like what you get when you bang your head again and again. I feel the floor moving and close my eyes. All good hardcore should do the same thing. Again and Again.

Later, local pop faves ORION play. I watch a man at the front with both hands down a woman's trousers. I cannot take my eyes from his face. He has short, curly hair and reddened cheeks and a similarly wide perma-grin to selfie-man, although this one is shorter. Sweat beads on his lips and his eyelids flicker, twitching occasionally as he digs below her belt line. The proceedings I observe look a lot like that game where you put your arms through someone's elbows to gesticulate on their behalf, if it was the "can you remove my tampon?" version. Whatever could he be searching for down there? From the side of the stage I'm too far to make eye contact with her, the standard check-in in these situations, so keep to searching her face for an abandon similar to his, hoping faintly that maybe it's fine because maybe she's fine. I watch her as she squirms almost imperceptibly and places her hands on his arms. Maybe she just wants to direct the physical conversation back towards her hips. Maybe it's fine. I can see no one I know to confer with; such is the downside of being a permanent tourist in another place. He kisses her neck and tries again. It's a subtle dance, a detail lost in a wider tableau. As per. My permanent hackles begin to jangle, low level outrage already rising, but drunk enough to feel only the dark brown rage and none of the sensible instincts that usually come with it. I imagine myself like the mic stand, propelled from stage side, flying over bad moshers in a gracious arc of glory, making impact with his temple and knocking his skull into a thousand pieces. Glitter. The gravity of the implications of that option brings me back to earth with a thud. I remind myself that I do not move like a metal pole and I do not know these people, so I settle for a watchful eye. I'm a gruesome witness or a misguided voyeur. Depending.

Some days after, I read an article describing the sexual improprieties of a comedic actor well-liked amongst my age bracket. Exclusively here, read all about it, et cetera. These stories come in tides nowadays, their pebble-upon-water effect lassoing outwards across the fetid timeline swamp, hot takes arising like the slippery steaming rocks in the bog of eternal stench. I couldn't have been less surprised by its contents, of course, a tale as old as time slash *my sex life*. And so, the actor wants her to act. Coercive histrionics. He's offering you a bit part in a new short film. He says he wants to know where she wants him to fuck her. This is the type of question with no right answer because it's largely about how he gets to feel asking it. If you can reply, no matter what is said you end up playing gaffer or best boy, assisting on an amateur production of some gronk's buffering wank realities, the sexual equivalent of an unpaid internship at Pornhub. Whatever happens there, you won't co-star. All power to actual porn performers, of course. Maybe somehow the emancipatory mission of the sex-rev got curtailed into a bit part where playing the role and learning your lines without overt physical violence is a win. Everyone, and I mean everyone, deserves better than a guest spot or a plus one. Just, damn. Read the room next time.

I've also been working at Repressed Records for a few months. The shop sells new and used records, specializing in stocking Australian DIY music as well used books and films, and it is a gentle joy to facilitate the hoarding tendencies of cultural consumers young and old. It's also a haven away from my other line of work, so every shift a brief and delightful respite from purely trauma-related employment. One morning I arrive to learn that my sweet colleague is devastated by the news about the comedic actor. He just really, really liked that TV show, you know? I gesture over to the recent restock of a SWANS LP and say something that I hope was somehow comforting about the "just world" theory, then flip the record. A few weeks later I come in to find a stash of BILL COSBY 12"s in the rubbish bin. Recently he handed me a spare copy of a self-help book on cognitive behavioural therapy techniques emblazoned with the words "Change Your Thinking" with a friendly "You'd be interested in this, it's really good." My immediate reaction to this unintentionally hilarious diss is to think, "Wait, but if I change my thinking, how will I continue to always be right?!" I approach the book with sneering caution and, of course, devour the whole thing in an afternoon. Self-knowledge is a recommended stop on the path to higher living, you know. I am fascinated by the patterns of behavior that lead to the patterns of thought that lead to the patterns of behavior. If we all live adrift in the green greener greenest chaos maze, then understanding why we keep on hiding in the bushes is a useful assist, whether you consult the runes, the stars, the books or the memes. I recommend that one about how you tie your loaf of bread when you put it back in the cupboard. I'm "chaotic neutral."

FELIX HAVOC
FIN DE SIECLE ANGST

When punk first started, one of its defining characteristics was *speed*. In our era of blastbeats and hyper thrash, it's rather whimsical to read contemporary reviews of the RAMONES and the DEAD BOYS with passages like "they were so fast I had to hold on to the bar." And while some '77 punk bands played fast for their era, it was the move to hardcore that really injected speed into the equation in a raw and visceral way. With the eruption of thrash around 1982, bands like DRI embraced speed and energy for maximum impact. When I got into punk in the '80s, DRI's *Dirty Rotten* EP was widely regarded as the fastest and most intense hardcore around. But each generation tries to outdo the last, and just as the RAMONES sounded fast to someone who grew up listening to LED ZEPPELIN, and DRI sounded fast compared to the RAMONES, it was inevitable that the next wave to come up was going to play even faster and more intense. And so it was that by the late '80s crust and grind had upped the tempo to the point where DRI was sounding pretty slow. This was a magical time to be listening to hardcore, because every few months something more intense would drop. For me, the quest for speed and intensity crested in the late '80s. While certainly there have been more technically fast bands since, and musicians continue to push the envelope, there is something to be said for the magical combination of speed and power with really memorable songs. To my mind, this argument was largely settled by NAPALM DEATH on their Peel Session recordings.

Let's back up a bit. For most of us, the EXTREME NOISE TERROR / CHAOS UK LP came like a bolt from the blue. This LP took the speed of American hardcore bands and mixed it with the intensity of Bristol punk (CHAOS UK / DISORDER, etc) and suddenly a whole new sound. CHAOS UK, one of punks all-time greats (let us celebrate their entire catalog), never sounded better, so fast, thrashing and intense. But EXTREME NOISE TERROR was a whole new animal.

Incredibly raw and intense. This was 1986, and bands were starting to get faster, and more bands were being influenced by metal, which was also getting faster. Then a few months after that ENT / CHAOS UK split NAPALM DEATH's *Scum* showed up in the record store, and it was a bomb dropping. This was a pure injection of raw, electrical power into hardcore music. The fast parts manically fast, the slow parts crushingly heavy, and the vocals so raw and distorted. I've read a lot about the older generation of punks and how, when they first heard DISCHARGE, all music made prior suddenly sounded kind of dated. This is how me and my crew felt when *Scum* dropped. Suddenly the UK scene was really cool and we were scouring zines, *MRR*, and thanks lists for info about the new wave of UK bands. HERESY and RIPCORD also had speed and power, DOOM and EXTREME NOISE TERROR were really intense, but NAPALM DEATH had this next level of intensity that took them over the edge. At the time that *From Enslavement to Obliteration* came out, some music critic types were saying this was the "end of music" and that things had been taken to their logical conclusion. Indeed, could the blastbeats be any faster without just becoming a blur? That said, this LP was a bit of let down, especially after *Scum*. I mean it's good, and intense, but the songs aren't as memorable as on *Scum* or *Mentally Murdered*, which followed it. Indeed, *Mentally Murdered*, which marks the shift into, death metal, is in my opinion, superior. However, the lineup changes and death metal that followed failed to follow up on this potential. One release shines above all others in this band's epic, genre defining catalog: the *Peel Sessions*. The September 1987 and March 1988 Peel Sessions take this already extreme band to new extremes. The songs are recorded at incredibly high speed and with such great precision. Each song is short, fast, powerful, and epic. The Peel Sessions have a great way of capturing the live intensity of a band in a world class studio setting. And these two Peel Sessions do that perfectly. I know that other bands—say, BRUTAL TRUTH—who followed were technically playing faster. But let us remember that, as good as they are, BRUTAL TRUTH were basically copying NAPALM DEATH. I find it interesting that after achieving such heights of musical achievement NAPALM DEATH quickly decanted for death metal and side projects. Like the restless soul who strives to the top, they planted their flag on the summit then moved on to other adventures. That said, the magic and mystique of this line up failed, upon fragmentation, to regain those heights. All this aside, the NAPALM DEATH Peel Sessions are to me, the pinnacle of speed and intensity in hardcore.

Let's take a few more Belgian and Dutch 7"s off the shelf and for a spin.

NEO PUNKZ, from Holland, put out a great 7" called *Fascist Fuckers* in 1980. Judging from the band photos on the cover, they had a great punk look: leather jackets, spiky hair, and chains in the Sid Vicious style. Their lo-fi, mid-tempo attack sounds a bit slow to modern ears, but it's full of venom and spite. I put this in between the early raw punk bands like CHAINSAW and PIGZ but just before the more uptempo sounds of what we now call UK82 moved in. When you listen to records of this era, there is a great deal of variety. '77 punk opened up all the doors, so that hard driving snotty punks like this shared the bill with Marxist art students versed in theory playing more minimalist jams. '79–'80 seems like a wild and open era, and things codified into hardcore or new wave or post punk by '81 or '82. This one was reissued a few years ago by La Vida Es Un Mus.

The ONION DOLLS were a Belgian band with one 7", "Kids / Hot Love," from 1979. Their sound is more of an upbeat punk rock which reminds me a lot of US bands like the NORMALS, SKINNIES, and some of those *Bloodstains Across Texas* bands on VVV. It's catchy and rockin' and you could almost picture it being played on the radio. This was reissued in 2011.

DEFINITIVOS from Belgium put out a 7" in 1981 called "The Modern Dance." Like many of the Dutch bands, this outfit took its cues from UK art / post-punk like GANG OF FOUR, the FALL. But these songs have enough punk bite to save them from falling too deep into the art school end of the pool.

SPERMICIDE were another Belgian band with kind of a droning dark punk sound. The song "Belgique" is pretty raging with a driving riff that prevents it from getting hung up.

Most of these bands put out one 7" between '70 and '81 and then faded away. You have to imagine many of these people were talented and creative, but had few outlets in the boring mainstream '70s culture. Punk exploded and everyone from students to street trash could now start a band to give voice to their anger, outrage, angst, or creativity. But most of these people probably had plenty of other opportunities in life outside playing punk music. Now, decades later, the band is just a lark from the school days before going on to a career or family. It seems too often go the other way too—playing in a band was the last burst of life from someone who succumbed to drugs, addiction, or AIDS. A few bands went on to long careers or became professional musicians. Usually playing some more commercial genre than punk. But in the deep back catalog is a punk 7" from those early days.

The SCABS, from Belgium, have one such 7", another kind of dark and arty band whose female vocals invite comparison to SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES. As far as I can tell, this band went on to release many more records into the '90s, but I could not tell you what they sound like. As is often the case, I don't really want to know either.

CONTINGENT were another band from Belgium, with one 7" from 1980. This is some great snotty UK influenced punk rock. It reminds me a bit of bands like ADVERTS. It's got lots of verve and energy, and apparently this band recorded and LP in 1981 that was only released in 2014, and it's pretty killer. I think if it had come out it would be fondly remembered as RAXOLA or HUBBLE BUBBLE (though it falls a bit short of the KIDS or PIGZ).

THE AMERICAN SNOOZE

MIRANDA FISHER

Holy shit, how lucky am I to get to write my first column in the aftermath of our "no streaming services" prank?! I get to avoid trying to come up with something new to say about what it's like to move into the *MRR* compound and start coordinating the magazine, since it's all inevitably been said already (and probably better) by my predecessors. No need for me to get all sappy about what it feels like to be a part of the magazine. Instead, I get to take up space gloating about how good y'all got got!

So, just in case anyone out there is still confused, *no*, we are not going to blacklist all bands using streaming services. That would leave us with approximately three bands to write about. We also don't think there's anything wrong with Bandcamp. Certain other streaming sites, maybe, but we're not about to go banning anyone from the magazine for using them. This was, in fact, a prank. One more time, for the people out there whose reading skills aren't so hot and who have been continuing to complain well after being informed of the truth: *A PRANK*.

All credit here goes to Joan, who both conceived of the prank and put it all together. I can't comment too much on the origins of this idea, other than to say that straight from the beginning we all thought (and continue to think) it was really fuckin' funny. But I *can* comment on people's reactions to it, which have been very entertaining for us to watch over the last few days.

It's kinda weird how many people have responded to finding out it's a joke by saying something about how "*MRR* doesn't have a sense of humor." Interesting reaction to finding out you fell for a joke. Understandable, I guess, since people don't like to be tricked and want to find a way that it's not their fault, but also pretty fucking absurd. If it weren't enough that the magazine recently hired the funniest person I know (*me*) as its new coordinator, I would think the mere fact of this joke would be evidence that *MRR* does have a sense of humor, duh.

Lots of the people saying dumb shit were also the people talking about how they haven't read the magazine in twenty years, which I guess makes sense. If you're twenty years out of the loop, then I wouldn't expect you to know shit about this magazine. Go ahead and brag about how you don't know what you're talking about. As dumb as those idiots were, though, the absolute worst reaction was the guy who said he can't wait until *MRR* burns down. To that gentleman I say: *dude I fuckin' live here don't say you want my house to burn down what the hell is wrong with you!!* (The best reaction was the guy on Twitter who said something like "the idea that *MRR* has outsmarted me is not great for my self-esteem.")

The fact of the matter is, though, that the vast majority of people who had some sort of reaction to last month's back cover—whether it was rage at our "new policy" or earnestly trying to figure out if their bands could still be covered—had such strong responses because they really, truly care about *Maximum Rocknroll* and think that it matters to punk and, ultimately, to people. This magazine has a legacy, and there's a sense of importance surrounding it. That's something I already knew, of course, but to get to be a part of it is another thing entirely. For me to get to be here and see how much people care about *MRR* feels *OH FUCK*, I'm doing the thing I said I wasn't gonna do, gotta go, bye!!!

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You can email me at miranda@maximumrocknroll.com if you wanna give me compliments or discuss the much-beloved defunct CBS drama *The Good Wife*. Do not email me if you want to complain about last issue's back cover.

This house is actually very dope and probably / hopefully will not burn down anytime soon; if you want to live here for free with me and Joan and 51,000 records and you're good at doing mail shit then email mrr@maximumrocknroll.com and apply to be our new distro coordinator.

women and butches

"Stfu maximum cock and roll you're reviews are Fucken l*me and you're insanely irrelevant now go circlejerk your hipster bosses and rot in a hole you pretentious coffee sipping jerkoffs"
—Instagram user slowdeathcruster

"Congratulations to *Maximum Rocknroll* on their upcoming NO REVIEWS policy"
—Twitter user @metaltxt

You know how on dating websites there are a number of people that say they don't want any drama? If I were to use those sites I would never message those people because I *crave* drama! When a worker at Bandcamp mockingly shared our "boycott streaming media" back cover, I gave a wild, frantic grin, becoming berzerk with drama frenzy. Thousands of people were furious, confused, disappointed, all at one single joke. I couldn't contain my laughter as angry people all across the internet kept angrily referring to *Maximum Rocknroll* as a bunch of "cunts" and other foul words. But for real—shame on all of you for throwing slurs around all willy-nilly!

As Miranda wrote, of *course* we're not creating a boycott of "streaming services" such as Spotify or Bandcamp. Despite what you may have heard from Jello Biafra, *MRR* isn't made up of dogmatic puritanical do-gooders. We have our beliefs *(No major label bands! No bands with corporate sponsorship!)* but boycotting streaming? *Nah!* Too many bands absolutely depend on websites like Bandcamp (which, by the way, is *not* a streaming service!) to freely share and distribute their music to other people. We don't want to turn *MRR* into a zine dedicated solely to reviewing tape- or CD-only releases—that would eliminate *every* NWI ripoff, UK82 reunion act, hardcore bozo bro-fest...you name it. We don't wanna exclude those acts, or any other punk act that uses Bandcamp to share their music. (If *you* wanna make a zine dedicated to musicians that don't use streaming services, go for it—we'd *love* to read it.)

That being said, streaming services deserve our full critical attention for a number of reasons. The way that so many people interact with media has shifted over the course of the last ten years, with very little dialogue from punks about how the internet has changed us as punks. Punks used to argue (especially in these very pages) about autonomy and control, about doing things ourselves, about the ethical dilemmas behind which labels we'd support and what distribution companies we'd order from. In these days dominated by Facebook event pages for shows, Bandcamp demo releases, and Instagram merch ads, that conversation doesn't happen nearly as often as it used to. These services are all a major part of *so* many people's daily interactions with the world, but with very little criticism. But unlike those days, where we could say without a doubt such morally black and white statements such as "major labels will act against your best interest," there is no easy argument for or against social media and services like Spotify or Bandcamp (although there are more bad things than good about social media in this woman's opinion).

We need to maintain a critical eye about the pros and cons of streaming media and internet-based music services. So to revive the ancient, revered *Maximum Rocknroll* tradition of music industry criticism, I am extremely pleased to announce that we will feature an interview with Liz Pelly from The Media and formerly of the Silent Barn (RIP) in next month's issue. (I was aiming for this month, but eh, it's not quite done yet.) She is also the author of two articles about Spotify's rather nefarious "pay for playlist" schemes and the ways they shut out the independent music industry. Both "The Secret Lives Of Playlists" and "The Problem With Muzak" were largely influential behind our "boycott" idea, and we certainly couldn't have pulled it off without those texts. Her research into the workings of Spotify is invaluable; "The Problem With Muzak" should be a classic piece of music criticism.

We would like to hear more discussion about ways that services like Spotify and Bandcamp as well as Facebook and Twitter may affect the way that we interact with DIY culture and music. Please write us a letter or an email with your thoughts about these services, *sans* words like "cunt." And despite what the back cover of issue #419 says, we're not going to boycott these services anytime soon.

PS: Do you have drama that you need to share with me? Wanna vent about that damn INEPSY review? Lemme know! joan@maximumrocknroll.com.

PPS: A lot of our regular columnists are on a hiatus, so we're still looking for columnists! Know about metal? Are you a sex worker who wants to talk about your work? Love hardcore? Have a unique perspective on life as a punk? Wanna replace Turbo as the Oi! columnist? Email mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

TIM YOHANN

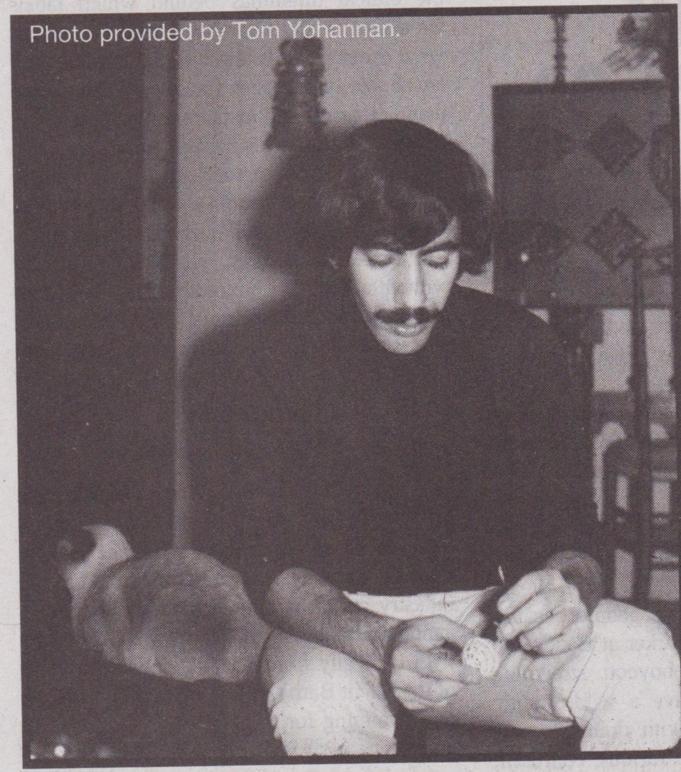

Photo provided by Tom Yohannan.

I started reading *Maximum Rocknroll* in the late '80s and moved to SF in the summer of '95. By August I was at *MRR* doing new issue day and zine reviews. Tim had already announced he had cancer, and jobs he had monopolized were being spread out among shitworkers. I took the opportunity to grab a mail day and edit the letters section. As a reader, I liked Tim's strident and straightforward approach. I felt a strong responsibility to try to match Tim's hard line and not let bullshit slip by.

It was Tim who showed me how to use a mouse and a Mac. I found him an effective but not patient teacher. I happened to be there when Tim signed his will, and said "lemme get my camera." I knew Tim hated being photographed, and would especially object here. But Tim's style was to playfully fuck with you, and I didn't mind giving it back. Of course he got pissed and said "don't fucking dare," so I didn't.

Like most, especially newer, shitworkers, I deferred to Tim. The slogan was "whoever does the work gets to decide," and Tim, even with fewer duties, did by far the most. But for sure he was a forceful personality. Once, pre-email, a columnist was travelling and submitted their work hand-written. Tim said "who's gonna type this?" in a way that sounded to me like, "no one's gonna type this." I thought it would be easy and worthwhile, but I wasn't gonna contradict him, and the column never ran. At new issue day, he argued with / yelled at a guy for being friends with a local band who'd recently signed with a major. The way he talked to him, I assumed Tim had known the guy a while, but he was new like me. The way I remember it, after venting, Tim softened and said he wasn't attacking the guy personally. Like Tim, I'm from the East Coast / Northeast US, so I thought it was a reasonable way to act. From reading the magazine, I didn't expect much different.

In my experience, if Tim thought something wasn't right, he'd lean on you about it, quite directly. But also he was serious that probably he wasn't gonna be there much longer, and other folks would have to use their own judgment to run the magazine. I was part of a group that fucked up a new issue day task. Tim was in a state, and tried to fire me from doing the mail in the aftermath. I told him I wasn't fucking up the mail like I helped fuck up new issue day, and he relented.

As part of doing the mail, I would enter record label or band addresses into the database. Some folks wouldn't put their address on the letter or the record, which was a bigger issue back then than it is now. I didn't give a fuck if there was no contact info, as I saw it as the band's or label's responsibility to make it available if they wanted to hear from people. What I didn't fully appreciate was how different Tim's attitude was from mine, giving his record collecting obsession. He would hunt down any clue he could find. He asked me how come this one band has no address. I said it wasn't on the record or the letter. He said, "what about the return address on the package?" I told him, "that shit's in the recycling." He said I should get the address there if it wasn't another spot. I said "next time I will." He was like, "what about this one?" I said, "you know where the recycling is." He gave me a look, stormed out there, and came back in the with cardboard mailer. He shook it at me and yelled, "it's the mail person's job to do this!!!" I said, definitely, from now on, that's what I'll do. I call this story, "The Time I Told Off Tim Yo." It's the only time it happened. Another time, I did some stupid shit regarding the letters column and got called out on it. Tim just said, regarding my initial fuck-up, "I wouldn't have done it that way," and let me handle fixing it how I saw best.

I only ever saw him put on two records, the Jam LP and the Rolling Stones, *England's Newest Hitmakers*. I told him I got the J Church *Nostalgia For Nothing* double LP singles comp for six bucks. He didn't seem impressed and offered drily, "must be your lucky day." Once, the subject of old hippies came up, and Martin Sprouse asked him when was the last time he spilled the bong water. "Probably twenty years ago to the day." The thing about his laugh was true. I read Tim as being tense, and thought it powered his hearty laugh.

Years later, while I was still a reviewer, an ex-shitworker asked me how I felt about Tim Yo being a Stalinist. I'd had a while to think about it. At first, I'd gone through disbelief and denial. It was *MRR* that had a lot to do with me thinking society is bullshit, and I regard Stalinism as actually worse than the current American system. Working with Tim, I never got the impression he was down with that shit. Eventually, I came around to acceptance. Tim's life's work of herding a bunch of (mainly) anti-authoritarian radicals didn't leave much space for state communism, thankfully. In hindsight, it seems to me that nobody thought Stalinism was cool from reading *MRR*, while other (more righteous) political tendencies were amplified. I do remember a time when the editor of another, supposedly "punk" magazine was in town and called up to see if they could stop by and visit. Tim had read in the magazine the editor saying they wanted *MRR* to stop publishing and asked about it. The editor allowed they did feel that way, so Tim said "hell no, you can't come here." I was there when Tim was asked, about this or some similar topic, "is this Risk (Tim's favorite board game, in which armies fight to conquer the world) or real life?" Tim made a face like, "is there really a difference?"

• —Jeff Mason

AN 1945–1998

The last time I saw Tim he made me sign his "do not resuscitate" order as a witness. I laid out the scene reports or the letters, fighting hard to get fucking PageMaker to behave more like Quark Xpress, while Tim and his crew of old commie pals played Risk on a handmade board in the living space of the MRR House. I was young, beyond socially awkward, and always in awe / intimidated by Tim.

Every time I walked in the house, I was like "I am actually at *MRR*, working on *MRR*. I have a key to the MRR House." I was a dumb weirdo from oppressive, pre-Internet, '80s, Republican, suburban Michigan, for whom discovering *MRR* (#57!) was like the...the most liberating thing that had ever happened to them. Like, holy shit, I don't have to live here and try to act like these people and be miserable? I can be myself and fight for what I believe in and *do stuff* to make things better? And there's an entire *soundtrack* to this movement and it's fucking incredible? It's obvious, but it was a revelation to 13-year-old me.

And the fact that I was actually living in California, going to punk shows every week, and working at actual fucking *Maximum Rocknroll*... it was sort of unbelievable. I'd hear people talk shit about Tim at Gilman and be like "but...but...he's *Tim*" It was like they didn't get it. Sure he was a pain in the ass. Sure he was didactic. But his single-minded force of will gave the world *MRR* and Gilman and everything those two institutions gave to the world. It's easy to sit in California and complain—legitimately—about problems these institutions have, but you have no idea how much *MRR* and Tim saved lives of weirdos and outcast and marginalized kids all over the planet. To me that's his legacy. And that record collection...People say you should never meet your heroes, but actually, Tim was both super cool and exactly what I expected him to be. Crazy cackling laugh, eager to talk about baseball (I remember talking to him a lot about the interview he did with Scott Radzinsky from Scared Straight and Steel Pole bathtub, and how bummed he was that Scott only wanted to talk about punk rock, and not his day job of pitching in the MLB) and capital P Punk rock (I was like "Oh, you're rehabilitating Ben Weasel" after the Lookout Crucifixion cover and he died laughing, because we both knew the Stalinist reference to his editorial management style was accurate...)

Anyway, to finish my story, that night I witnessed the DNR order, I finished my layout and paste up and tried to slip out the door without bothering anyone. Tim stopped me. He was like "Don't leave without saying goodbye. You need to say goodbye." I was like "Oh, yeah, bye Tim." And that was it. Within a few years, a kid and jobs meant I drifted away from active involvement in the scene. My fanzine editing tastes turned from dumb punk zines to dumb videogame zines (and now skate zines). My music tastes calcified—I probably own fewer than ten records recorded this century. It happens. I still buy every issue of *MRR*, though, and I still am incredibly thankful to Tim and the crew he established for saving me from a life of misery and showing me what could be done with your life. The punk world has no end of problems and bullshit but Tim kicked it into gear in a way that still pays benefits to weirdo kids—and adults—all over the planet. I think about him all the time and I miss him a lot.

—Chris Snak Fud

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I grew up in DC in the '80s. I bought my first issue of *MRR* at the campus record store at the University of Maryland College Park, I think it was issue 9, with the Stalin on the Cover. I have been a subscriber pretty much ever since. I grew to admire Tim's steadfast position on a lot of issues, especially relating to commercialism and the introduction of right wing political views into hardcore. While I did not agree with many of Tim's political views outside of hardcore, I did agree with most of his positions about the hardcore scene. I often wish Tim was still around to inject some venom into the discussion, or lack thereof, of these issues today. In the summer of 1987, I sublet my room in a DC area punk house, threw some belongings into a backpack, and hit the road. I wound up in the Bay Area and of course went to the newly opened Gilman Street Project to check it out. Back then, you had to buy a membership card, and it was Tim who sold me my card and explained the rules to me. I saw a lot of bands there that summer, like MDC, Fang, Christ on Parade, and I was at the infamous Feederz show where they threw dead animals into the audience. I'm pretty sure it was Tim who barred me and a crew of vigilantes from coming back into the show and storming the stage. In retrospect, we would have been playing into the Feederz' game, but I was pretty outraged at the time and still think whole stunt was in very poor taste. Tim wrote to me a few times, once or twice about records for review, once to ask about an interview for Code 13, and once to ask me if I wanted to do a regular column. Since I had grown up reading *MRR*, I was thrilled at the opportunity, and I've been on board ever since. As noted above, I really wish Tim was still around to hold people's feet to the fire and speak with authority about the current state of the hardcore scene.

—Felix Havoc

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In the early / mid '90s I was living in San Francisco and dating an *MRR* columnist. One night we were out and she needed to grab something she'd left at *MRR* HQ so we went over and went in (she had keys). It was kind of late at night, so we tried to be quiet, but a bleary-eyed Tim came staggering out of his room and took one look at us and called her over. He was sort of whispering, but I could clearly hear him ask her "What's going on and who is that thug you brought into my place?!?" I was always proud of being described as a thug by Tim Yo!

—Anthony Begnal

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In 1989, Ultraman was on tour and had a show at Gilman booked, but since All was playing someplace and there was another warehouse show with Neurosis, Bazooka Joe, Econochrist, and Verbal Assault, we were added to that show and the Gilman show was cancelled. That worked out fine, but of course there weren't a lot of people. Toward the end of the show, someone appeared with $100 for us and said it was from Tim Yo since he wanted to make sure the touring bands got paid. He told me that it wasn't something that was supposed to tell me but did so anyway. I thought that was really swell of him to do.

In 1990, Ultraman was back in SF to record our second album, and we spent the evening at *MRR* house through my friend Karin Gembus to watch the final episode of that season of *Twin Peaks*. That same night Tim Yo and friends were on the other side of the room playing Risk. Apparently that was a weekly game. I don't think I said much more than hello to him at the time though.

I was stoked he liked our first records that we put out ourselves. I think both self-released 7"s and both NRA albums got good reviews from at least a couple of different reviewers.

Anyway, like I said, not much of a story really, but that's what I have. His making sure we got paid was something that made an impression on me then and I of course never forgot.

—Tim Jamison

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BAY AREA GIRLS ROCK CAMP

2018 marks the tenth year of Bay Area Girls Rock Camp (BAGRC). Part of a network of rock camps all over the world, BAGRC is run by an amazing five-person staff and dozens of volunteers, who do everything from teach instrument lessons, host fundraisers, lead workshops, and coach bands made up of some of the Bay Area's most inspiring youth. In advance of their spring Rock Prom fundraiser, we caught up with current and former staffers to discuss the program's mission, challenges, and just how much us adult punks can learn from young people.

Interview and introduction by Grace Ambrose. Photos provided by Bay Area Girls Rock Camp.

MRR: Girls Rock camp is kind of a misnomer. Who is Girls Rock Camp for?

Shawna: When I think about a rock camp, I really feel it's for the freaks, the kids who are working through some self-esteem or bullying issues. It's for aspiring pop stars, or anyone who wants to play music. Or the kid who's like "I'm gonna wear a pig snout all day at summer camp." I feel that's the root of rock camp, just being yourself.

In terms of the name Bay Area Girls Rock Camp, our camp specifically is open to those who are marginalized through misogyny, which I think even men are. It's for girls, nonbinary, and trans youth. There are many rock camps and in the beginning [of the movement] it was "This is a girl zone," in a traditional sense of the way of that word, even though it was a radical approach. I don't think we're post gender yet; we still need to have those affinity spaces. But what has happened at Rock Camp and other places is that [that idea] is expanding. It's thinking of gender equity as a more expansive term for anyone who can benefit from that. Young trans people are often marginalized in the music scene in the same way that a young girl might be. I made up a cheesy acronym for girls: Gender Inclusivity through Radical Love and Support. Youth

POP PANDAS

SHAWNA SCROGGINS
Program and Outreach Coordinator
Co-Executive Director

JAIME CLARK
Operations Manager
Co-Executive Director

SEP MASHIAHOF
Development Coordinator

is a gift. A lot of this stuff that we theorize about and talk about in this really important way, they're just like "My gender is anti-gender." And it's just like...end of conversation. And it's a nine-year-old.

MRR: A team of five paid staff members runs a summer camp, an after-school program (GRASP), and a practice space that's open to former campers and their friends. A big part of what makes BAGRC so inspiring to me is how you have structured the division of labor, with an eye towards avoiding burnout and fatigue, a way of thinking about how work doesn't have to be exploitative.

Sep: It's a non-hierarchical structure. We have our Co-Executive Directors, Jaime and Shawna, but it's really self-motivated work. I'm very office-based, and that's because I'm writing grants throughout the year and managing fundraisers. We have two major fundraisers, Rock Prom, which is raising funds as we speak (please donate: tinyurl.com/rockprom2018) and the year-end appeal, where we mail out a year-in-review booklet to nearly 3,000 supporters.

Jaime: As Operations Manager, I do the bookkeeping at Rock Camp, tracking all the money that comes in or out of Rock Camp. Sep and I worked together to create the annual budget.

Chelsey: I'm still figuring out what I'm actually supposed to be doing! Me and Pei took over Sabrina's full-time position, which is now two part-time positions, so I'm technically the Program and Site Coordinator. Princess Pei Pei, Shawna, and I are all program staff, so we're at each program and coordinate the things that go on before during and after programming. It's like bottom-lining a never ending punk show—stuff is always happening, and we just need to be able to figure out how to keep it going. I think the BAGRC staff has grown so much, and I'm thankful for volunteers and staff before me from the start to present who have been keeping Rock Camp going. We're constantly re-thinking what works and adjusting what doesn't—it's cool to work at a place where we're actually in charge of how we do things. Our future is heading towards a workplace that has less non-profit-style burnout with more opportunities to be supported and focused on self-care.

It's very healing to be a part of the spaces that you wish—you didn't even know that you wished—you'd had when you were younger.

Princess Pei Pei: I recruit and help train volunteers. When something comes up with volunteers during programs, I take care of it. In general there are a lot of logistics.

Sep: I'm trying to get involved with the programming more. It's something I talk to my therapist about, because I want to feel like I'm a part of this and not doubt myself all the time. This past summer, I would go every day and just check in and do little tasks and just talk to the kids, and with GRASP I sort of was able to do that as well. Part of my job is learning how to present a non-profit worker persona, which is far from who I actually am.

I didn't even know what 501(c)(3) really meant when I started. A thing that I feel is so awesome and was derived out of femme skill is "fake it til you make it." When I started realizing that I could do this job, it was a confidence booster. If you're a femme person, you're just told you're dumb, that you can't do anything. But then Rock Camp is like, "No, you can!"—whether it's music or going into an office and writing these grants.

Shawna: People just had an idea, and they were inspired and they took a few steps, and then it just kept growing. [In my job] I mainly do outreach to get students involved and communicating with families and teaching some workshops. [I lead] Gender Justice, which talks about gender roles and stereotypes, and The History of Rock'n'roll. I screened Wizard Apprentice's documentary that she made called *Enter the Pink Void*. That was really cool 'cause they got to see a DIY tour and also kind of talk about stereotypes that go with being a musician. What I think is really cool about Rock Camp is it doesn't have to be, "Oh I'm so tortured or sad!"—which is fine, but it's also about just making music for joy and fun and expression.

MRR: Joy is certainly the adjective I think of most when it comes to Rock Camp. What are some of the geographically-specific challenges of running a rock camp in the Bay Area?

Shawna: I would say one of the big things is securing space; the reason we have our new offices is that our rent went up by forty-five percent or something. It's really cool to work with Oakland School of the Arts and the Malonga Casquelord Center for the Arts, but it would be really awesome if we could have our own site where we could host events. It would really build up more of a community.

One thing in terms of outreach that's come up is that more and more people are leaving the Bay Area. I've realized now that a lot of people are paying the full tuition amount and they're signing

CHELSEY DEL CASTILLO
Progam and Site Coordinator

PRINCESS PEI PEI
Program and Volunteer Coordinator

SABRINA SIERRA
Former Program and Volunteer Coordinator

up early. So now I'm like, OK, now I have to save some spots for financial aid people. We created a transportation stipend for our after school program where we reimburse families to get there because some people are coming from pretty far away.

We also have liberatory practices training for our volunteers and offer stipends in order to make it more accessible [to volunteer]. There was an intentional shift to be like, OK, we want our volunteers to reflect the youth that we're working with: more youth of color, youth from Oakland, youth who are getting full financial aid. I think that that's an ongoing process, and one way that we can really provide services to Oakland youth is figuring out employment and even using our network to help with housing connections as they age into adults. There are people that I know from Rock Camp who are 23 now and from Oakland and not able to find a place to live. So I think it would be really cool if one day we could hire even more people and as campers get older, more of those people that we hire will be youth from Oakland. Ideally one of those people would take all of our jobs eventually.

Jaime: Yeah, I think there's a dream, I think a dream for the space is also having it be, yes, a venue and office spaces and practice spaces and places to store gear, but also somewhere that has a kitchen and has a homework zone for kids and childcare area for kids who are too young to come to our programs and a sex ed or health center with counselors for kids. A true community center.

I don't think that we need to say the exact number of our annual budget here, but I think saying it out loud is like, "Oh my God, that's so much money." But working with our board of directors, some of whom are people who have a lot of non-profit experience, they're on the other side of the same coin and are shocked at how small the budget is. About seventy percent of our budget is spent on programming. It is and will always be a priority of Rock Camp to be able to keep Rock Camp accessible to people of all income levels. So there's full financial aid available to anyone.

Sabrina: Gentrification in the Bay really affects people's ability to volunteer. It feels like there's no shortage of people who want to help out at our programs, it's just hard making the kind of commitment that offers a more stable environment for kids to build relationships with people. We get people who want to come for an afternoon, and that's awesome, and we always invite people to come through, but it's been a lot harder to get people that can be like, "Yeah, I can commit to a week." Everyone just has to hustle so hard just to live here at all. I can feel that struggle a little more each year.

Sep: We want to create sustainable positions for people who need them to be able to exist in rock camp—and rock camp needs it too, you know?

> ***It's thinking of gender equity as a more expansive term for anyone who can benefit from that...Youth is a gift.***

Shawna: I'd love to have more self-care and emotional well-being or first aid workshops, just things to fortify the youth and volunteers and the staff. I know that our main point is music, but I feel it's all tied together. If we had our own space and more people, we could do more things like that.

Sabrina: Most other rock camps in the US are completely volunteer-run, and they do not do as much programming as we do. We do have a really tight budget and we can't afford to pay everybody, so the choices have been, "OK, how much money can we allocate to that? How can we use this [funding] to fill the roles that are a bigger commitment and take up more time or experience?" And then also, what can make it accessible? Paying for people's background checks and transportation, offering that is one of the first things.

Then [we want to make] roles for people to help with retention and give more leadership opportunities. We started a support crew a few years ago, which is for returning volunteers to spread out the leadership at camp and make more opportunities for people to have ownership of what's going on. Then also starting with the peer mentors, we wanted to give them stipends and start to build their professional experience in a space that's really supportive and different from other jobs available to teens, which can often be pretty exploitative. Peer mentors are people who have come to camp for at least two years and they're at least fifteen, so between fifteen and eighteen, and then they come and we train them and then they are either helping teach an instrument class or acting as band coaches. So they're working with other campers and using their experience of being around camp to lead them through the activities. And it's been a really positive program, we've gotten a lot of good feedback from it. And it's helping keep people involved that want to be part of rock camp, but they need a new challenge and a new way to engage. The opportunity to give them more responsibility and not have such a ageist structure of who is leading things has been amazing.

MRR: The Peer Mentor program sounds really special, as

It's not easy being a young person, and as adults we can curate a space to encourage young people to actually be themselves, find their voice, and have adult role models who are listening to them.

a way to facilitate exchange of knowledge and information between youth. I've learned so much from youth about how to be a kind, clear, and conscientious communicator and collaborator. As an adult, you're technically in an instructional / supervisory role, but it's also a two-way teaching relationship.

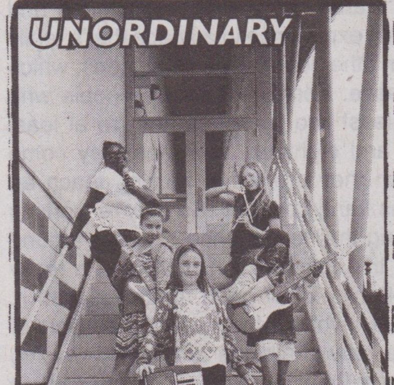
Chelsey: I hear a lot of adults say that they really wish they had a space like this when they were growing up. That's hella real, 'cause I know I really didn't have a lot of support growing up, either. Rock Camp is cool because we can tangibly create those environments we didn't have. It's not easy being a young person, and as adults we can curate a space to encourage young people to actually be themselves, find their voice, and have adult role models who are listening to them. Sometimes it's weird to be in an official role where you can't always be the fun person, but I'm getting used to it. If you treat youth like real people with agency, instead of trying to get them to be quiet and follow rules, they'll seriously enlighten you. They're hecka smart and inspiring.

Shawna: I lived in this collective house in San Francisco and everyone there was volunteering at Rock Camp the first year. I really admired all of them because they all played music and all of their friends played music, but I didn't play music at the time. And they were like, "You have to volunteer!" And I was like, "I can't, I don't play music!" So I didn't volunteer. But I went to hang out at lunch and I still remember the day so clearly. All the volunteers were like, "Oh my God, I'm working through so many childhood issues right now." But in the best way, you know. It's very healing to be a part of the spaces that you wish—you didn't even know that you wished—you'd had when you were younger. I think what I saw most back then was how Rock Camp really just uplifted everyone and brought people together. That's how I started playing music, because of that whole mentality where it's just "play music!" And my friends who were also volunteers asked me to join a band with them. Ever since then I've been in a lot of bands, and it's changed my life.

Sabrina: Before Rock Camp, I had some fun bands and some really toxic bands, but I never really thought about the band relationship as being something that could be healthy and worked on like any other kind of intimate relationship. After playing music with people who've done Rock Camp, I realized it could be super supportive and nurturing. And it's definitely raised the bar for my expectations and thinking about what possibilities of creative relationships can be like, which has been really amazing.

Sep: The lunchtime performances are also really cool. The pit that happened when SBSM played was so beautiful and awesome, watching the campers cut loose and go wild with the music. You're like, "Oh no, my music is too loud and evil sounding, they're not going to like it." But then they do! They just tap into themselves and then they ask you cool questions, like, "Why are you so loud?" And it's such an earnest question and being able to answer that by being like "Because girls deserve to be loud cuz men are loud all the time." But you also get to be loud and hear yourself say that; that's a mutually beneficial part, you're telling yourself that just as much as you're telling them.

Shawna: I feel like it's really like forces me to be like more calm. And it's so much about boundaries. I've seen young people assert their boundaries or not care about shit at like eight or nine years old where I'm like, thank you for showing me that. I feel grateful that students would trust me to teach them because they *do* have a choice on if they listen to you or participate or not. It forces me to be more gentle and more reflective. For me sometimes I've wished when I was younger that adults would have gone a little more out of their way to have boundaries or look in and say "Hey, what's up? How was your day?" Also just keeping the joy of playing music. Watching Little Debbie and the Crusaders record last night, they were just like, "We're here to record this album. We've practiced..." Just not taking it all for granted and remembering that like it's a fun, exciting thing regardless of how old you are. I really feel like it's cool to be like, oh I'm friends with young people, and to keep that friend part but also the boundaries part. But it's not like working in a school, which is what I originally wanted to do, to be a history teacher.



THE BAND WITH NO NAME

SAGUARO
JULY
23 CHARL
24 ALICE

Chelsey: Shawna always says this is a space where we can escape school and what's happening in the outside world. That's real, this is our own space. And that's what I think of when I think of joy.

MRR: That space might be different than the space their families are cultivating for them at home. How have you dealt with parents who might be surprised by or disagree with some of the politics of Rock Camp?

Shawna: I'll say even when the young people aren't using radical language, they're still being really radical, even if it's just accepting something that they don't understand or have language for yet, which I think is really cool. I feel like our language on our website doesn't sound radical to me, but it lays it out a little bit, and we don't have that many [conflicts with parents]. There's one parent who was like, "I'm not coming back because you had your showcase at a bar and adults were drinking." Or one parent who will be like, "Oh, what's this gender justice stuff? My kid came home and they were asking me questions that I don't even know the answer to." But I only have had one really bad experience where I felt like I had to have this conversation for 45 minutes where the person was just asking questions about gender justice and saying they can't bring their kid back and saying that we're trying to turn their kids gay. In some circles of parents, we are known as the gay camp.

Gay? Like, OK, your kid's gonna feel free to be themselves, which might mean that they're expressing a new name or a different pronoun than what you're used to.

Jaime: I've seen the program staff be really available to field those questions for parents even before camp happens, like over the phone.

MRR: I think many outsiders assume that the bands that form all play punk songs, which certainly isn't the case. The music played is genre bending, genre melding, and genre destroying, but the movement at large does have some connection to punk and DIY communities. What are some of the lessons you've taken from your time organizing and playing in punk scenes and how has that informed the way you approach you work at Rock Camp?

Sep: In DIY I learned that Punk™ is a scene of its own, but anything that is just driven by you being yourself and your heart and putting scraps together to make yourself feel better and do positive shit for the people around you, especially marginalized people who need it, is punk.

Chelsey: Rock camp is punk as fuck. I mean, speaking for myself—I'm purely using what I've learned from punk and DIY to inform how I work, since I don't really have experience existing any other way. Just gotta make it work somehow. But it depends on what you think is punk, I guess. Qualities that I consider to be punk are sharing resources, being adaptable to changing circumstances, and cultivating actual support for the people around you.

Sep: I'm a jaded punk and I feel like Girls Rock Camp has cut into me even being able to do punk, because I'm tired all the time and I can't go to shows or have energy for band practice. Something that will always be like central to my heart is uplifting women and queer people's efforts in music, and that's the whole point of Scream Queens Radio, and I feel like I'm doing that now with the youth. I want to see all music scenes with more girls and queers in them, especially Black and brown youth making this music. Punk is transforming. They inform each other; Rock Camp informs punk and punk informs it.

Jaime: Advice for other people who are thinking about [starting] rock camps would be to think about all of the different networks that people have and especially the ones outside of punk and to do outreach for volunteers from the get-go with people aren't "punk," who are outside of networks of people who they know through punk; an important part of Rock Camp is that there are so many different experiences and perspectives meeting in one place.

Sabrina: I felt really fatigued when you first asked the question because I was like thinking about certain experiences in DIY spaces and organizing and how a lot of the same issues in mainstream culture just get replicated. The difference with being part of Rock Camp is like, OK, this is a place to like first recognize that it doesn't have to be that way and to also be validated for all the shit that you put up with and have hope that you can have a space that actually *does* feel good. A lot of people come to punk scenes because they don't fit in other spaces and then to be rejected and invalidated in the scene there is doubly shitty. I think like a lot, a lot of people, like Shawna and other people that have been in involved with Rock Camp, have done a lot to change the Bay Area music scene and make it much more accessible to people who wouldn't have felt comfortable otherwise, who didn't feel like they were allowed to be in those spaces.

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Shawna: I felt like the thing for me about being punk that works at Rock Camp is, like keep it cool, man. If some shit breaks like seriously, I got some tape. Running around, you're like breaking down, there's a meltdown over here, cleaning up vomit. I try to bring that DIY mentality to my work because it's like, oh we got in this position and it has to do with music and we can make it whatever we want it to be. For me that's what punk is about—you just take things and make it whatever you want it or need it to be. And somehow we got a budget and an office and hundreds of people let us watch their kids.

Princess Pei Pei: I've had experiences where I'm not treated very well or seen and also experiences, like at Rock Camp, where it's the exact opposite. These experiences motivate me to treat everyone well that I come into contact with. Rock Camp is a great place to work and community to be a part of because my efforts to be kind are way supported and it feels to me like a place where I can assume that everyone is trying to be good to each other.

MRR: What advice do you have for people who want to get involved with Rock Camp or playing music but are nervous that they don't know enough or have the "right" skillset? How can you convince them that there is space for them in this movement?

Princess Pei Pei: If you want to get involved, do it! Let us know! We will talk before it happens so we can support you in getting the right, most comfortable role for you at this time. If you want to do something not directly musical, we have plenty of non-musical positions available.

Sep: Join Women's Rock Camp because that's a really awesome program. It's about experimentation, which is always something that I emphasize in grant applications. It's reducing barriers to arts participation, and the way we do that is promoting experimentation: anything that's a sound that feels good to you, it's some sort of medium or platform for you to express yourself and make yourself feel better. It's just like a visceral need, and it's not to fit any sort of image. It's not for fame or anything. That can be your thing if you want. But if you're like, "Music's cool, I want to try it!" then get a busted keyboard at Salvation Army, just tap on it and just do spoken word or something. Then over time, you can create something new that'll open pathways, especially if you are a marginalized person. I'm actually not really encouraging that many white men to start bands; this advice isn't really for them. Whatever. Everyone tells you to do it, whatever you want all the time. But especially if you've been feeling voiceless within music, just do it and know that Girls Rock Camp people and so many other people are so excited to see you bring it out of your bedroom and out of your heart cage.

Sabrina: It can be harder if there's not visibility of people who share the same musical experience, background, or taste or any kind of identity. It can be harder to be like, "Oh, I can see myself doing this." I think something important to think about is that your voice is important and it can even just be for yourself or your friends, but also maybe it's for that person who doesn't see themselves either but could see you.

Chelsey: Surround yourself with inspiring people who want to see you thrive, and support each other. Everything is so much easier when you aren't trying to do it alone! Don't even waste your time on toxic people who aren't giving you real support—throw them out! They need to find their own way. Try living out your wildest fantasies, even if it feels impossible. It's cool to trust yourself and be vulnerable. My advice might sound tacky, but think about it.

Shawna: Take what you need.

Sep: Also it's better that you don't know what you're doing. It's always just better. And that's why the Girls Rock Camp bands are so good

ROCK PROM: THE SEQUEL, a joyful spring party celebrating Bay Area Girls Rock Camp's ten years of existence, takes place on May 11th at Humanist Hall in Oakland, CA. They're trying to raise $25,000 by then—donate at tinyurl.com/rockprom2018. Find out more about BAGRC at bayareagirlsrockcamp.com

WHY DO YOU COME TO ROCK CAMP?

KOKO of SUGARED OUT

I love music. It's so great, it's phenomenal, it's amazing and I wanna learn more about how it works, what's going to become of it. About the instruments I've learned and the instruments that I want to learn.

EMORY of the STAR GAZERS

Because I wanted to learn a new instrument and it sounded really fun, making our own band and performing on stage.

ELSA of SUGARED OUT

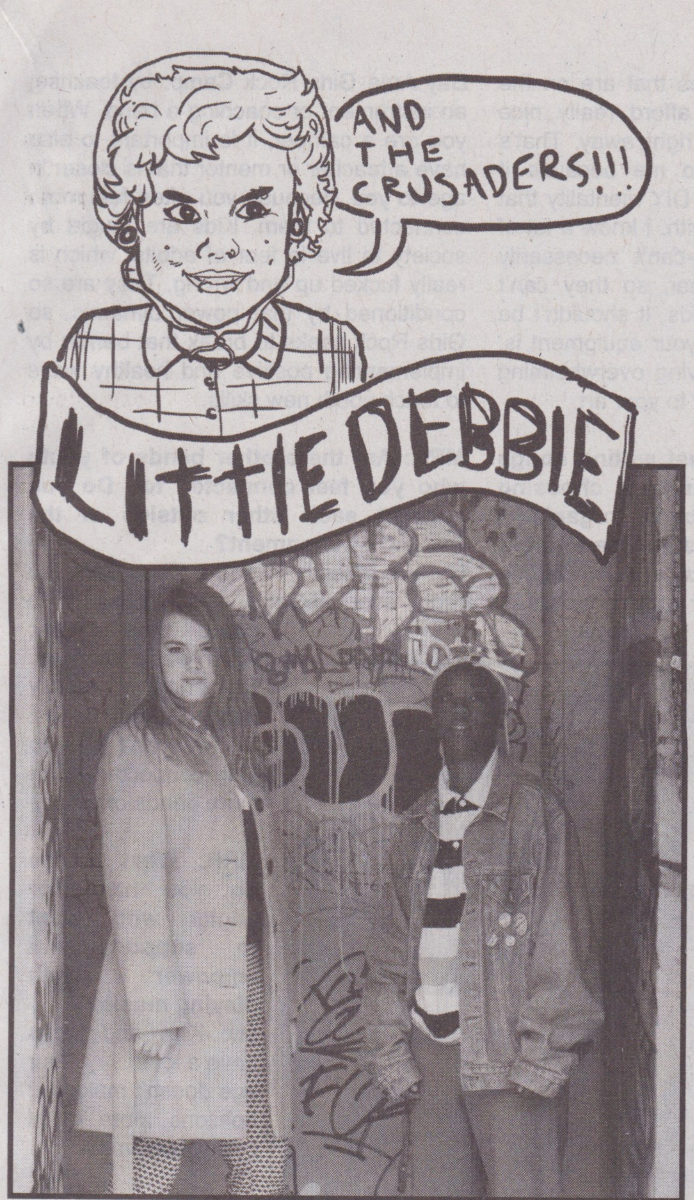
Because last year I did it and it was super fun. Usually I don't play piano in front of other people and I wanted to sometimes.

MORGAN of M.I.S.A.K.

I didn't have any experience with guitar before I came to Rock Camp. I also wanted to have a band to see if my music choices would come together with other people.

LOLA of the STAR GAZERS

I joined Rock Camp because wanted to learn new instruments and it sounded really fun.



Little Debbie and the Crusaders are a long-running BAGRC band. They just recorded their first album.

TERRI
18 years old, drums

LIV COLLOM
17 years old
vocals/guitar

Interview by Grace Ambrose.

Photos by Jeffie Freeman.

MRR: How did you meet? How did the band form and how did you choose the name? What does it mean? Is one of you Little Debbie? Both of you? What are you crusading against?

Liv: We met at Bay Area Girls Rock Camp probably four years ago as a part of another band. Terri and I stuck with the camp and ended up becoming Peer Mentors there, but we only really saw each other during the summertime. Last year we reunited, and decided to start playing music together again.

Terri: We actually never really planned on being a full on band. When we did reunite, I went to her house and we just caught each other up on our lives and interests. We ended up talking for hours about our love for Brandy, and that's where our cover came from. Just messing around at her house with one song. One song became two, and not too much longer after that we had around five or six ready to perform.

Liv: The name "Little Debbie and the Crusaders" was an inside joke I had with my little brother, who does a lot of the band's artwork. We came up with it when we were on a road trip in 2015. We were trying to think of the weirdest band names we could. I was really, really lucky Terri liked it and wasn't too weirded out by it. Now that I think of it, I guess the name stuck with us because we're juxtaposing the cutesy mascot of a snack food company with a more soldierly image. In that regard, some of our songs are about serious topics, while others are more sugary and fun.

MRR: What's the most exciting part about being in a band?

Terri: Definitely listening to the final product of the songs we make. Most of the time we write separately, so being able to come together and make all the pieces click is extremely satisfying.

Liv: I like having this alter ego emerge from me on stage. In real life, I am a pretty shy and awkward person, so I feel like a superhero when I start to play and release all my inhibitions. I also like being able to headbang all the time.

MRR: You do a very cool cover of a Brandy song. What musicians do you find inspirational? Why did you choose to cover that song? What topics do you sing about in your original songs?

Liv: Thanks for checking out our cover! Brandy is definitely influential to us, and we are both huge fans. I feel like Little Debbie is unique from other punk groups in that our sound is very early 2000s pop-inspired. We love a lot of pop stars from that era, like JoJo, Rihanna, Michelle Branch, and Nelly Furtado. They all sing with melisma (riffing), which I incorporate into a lot of our tunes when I sing. I am also really inspired by rockers like Chino Moreno from Deftones and Jeff Buckley, because they have such beautiful voices, and when they combine it with a backdrop of heavier rock, it's totally unique and magical. Our rockier side also comes from bands like Hole, Bikini Kill, the B-52s, Sleater-Kinney, the Dead Kennedys, and the Go-Go's.

Each song I write is sort of like a look into my life, because all of them are so personal. A lot are actually more serious, such as

Going to camp makes me feel like myself I am more confident then ever to do my own thing !

JOANEE (L) and TRINITY of WET INK (R)

Trinity says: "I go to Rock Camp because it's an amazing place to be. You'll never meet anyone as kind as the volunteers and the instructors. You'll never be judged or bullied and it's filled with people who want to see you succeed and people who know you can do it. I can't wait to go back this summer."

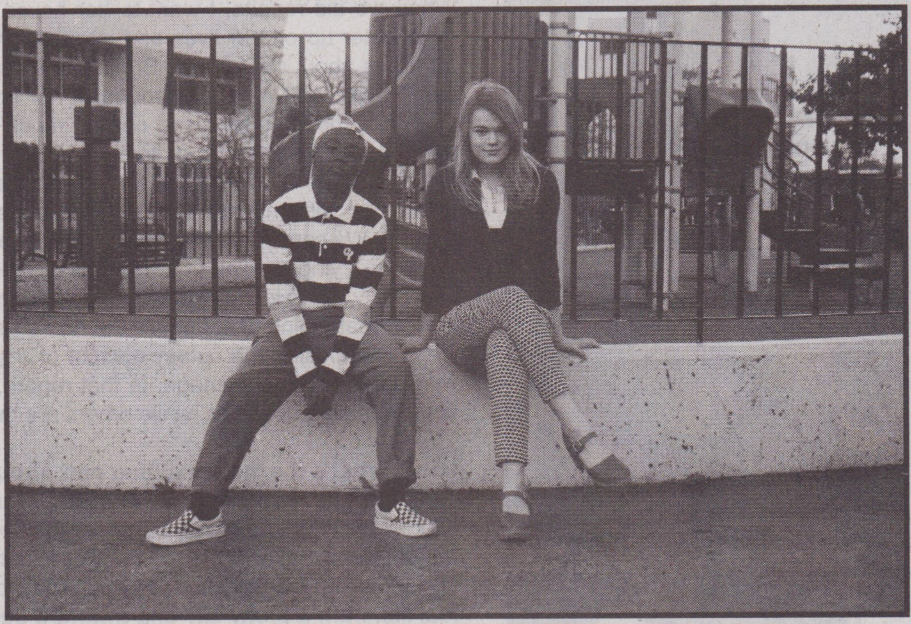
"An F in Shop," which is about my struggle with clinical depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder. "Get With It" is about people being scared to talk about their personal boundaries or needs because they don't want to be seen as "needy" or "extra."

Terri: Both of us write songs, so we get to showcase both of sides of ourselves as well as our unique personalities and musical styles.

Liv: We have some videos on YouTube here and there, but we just recorded our first EP at Women's Audio Mission in SF, so that will be coming out soon!

MRR: Tell us a little bit about your routines as a band. Where do you practice? How often? What does a typical practice look like for you?

Liv: We rehearse at my house at least once a week. Practices usually involve sharing songs we've written, listening to a bunch of music, and smoothies.



MRR: What are your favorite kinds of shows to play and why? You play a lot of benefits. What causes and organizations are important to you and why?

Liv: I like to play benefits because I use music as a way to fight for social justice. Punk rock, like the rest of the world, is dominated by straight white men, and if you don't fit one or more of those descriptions, it can be extremely hard—unsafe even—to express yourself, or even enjoy music in a public space. I remember one time when this dude grabbed me while I was watching a punk show, and I was scared to go to concerts or play in public for a while. But Little Debbie helped me get through that rough patch. We are trying to use music as a platform to fight against racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia, issues that so often plague the punk movement and the world.

Another issue important to us is accessibility in music. I've seen a resurgence in younger punk groups in the current musical landscape, which is incredible, but the ones that are on the forefront usually can afford really nice gear and instruments right away. That's pretty disheartening to me because it strays so far from that DIY mentality that fueled punk to begin with. I know a lot of people—us included—can't necessarily afford this kind of gear, so they can't identify with these bands. It shouldn't be about how expensive your equipment is, it should be about having overwhelming dedication and passion to your art.

MRR: A band isn't just writing songs — it's also picking artwork, choosing what shows to play, organizing practices, and being sensitive to other people's needs in a vulnerable process like making music or putting yourself out there. What are the challenges and benefits of there being only two people in the band? Is there a time you disagreed about something the band was doing? How did you approach it?

Liv: I feel like Terri and I are super connected musically. For the most part, we don't tell each other how they should play their part, and trust that the other person will play exactly what the song needs. It's really worked out—I don't think we have had any major fights or disagreements.

MRR: You are both BAGRC Peer Mentors. Can you explain what that program is and what you do in it? What are the advantages of having Peer Mentors instead of just relying on the volunteers and staff members?

Liv: Peer Mentors are teens that work at Bay Area Girls Rock Camp, by teaching an instrument or coaching a band. When you are a camper, it is important to also have a teacher or mentor that is closer in age to you, because you often feel more connected to them. Kids are taught by society to live in fear of adults, which is really fucked up and wrong. They are so conditioned by that power dynamic, so Girls Rock seeks to break that barrier by implementing positive and healthy ways to teach youth new skills.

MRR: Are there other bands of youth who you feel connected to? Do you support each other outside of the BAGRC environment?

Liv: We recently played a "Take Back the Night" event at Oakland Tech with a group called Blue Friday, which was a lot of fun. Right now we mostly play with adult bands, but we can't wait to get connected with more bands of youth.

MRR: What advice do you have for adults who want to support and empower youth playing music?

Liv: Kids and teens have a lot to say—our age doesn't make our opinions more trivial or any less valid.

* * *

Little Debbie and the Crusaders just recorded their first EP. Keep an eye on BAGRC social media or follow the band on Facebook to hear it. Spit Tips, Party Bus, and The Bayonettes are other active camper bands with Facebook pages. Look them up and support youth making music!

The price of LEGAL MARIJUANA

We would not be able to have issue #420 without some sort of marijuana-related content. Throughout the United States, many cities and states have legalized weed, while other states are pushing for legalization or decriminalization. Legalization of the sale and usage of marijuana has drastically changed the way that marijuana is produced and distributed throughout the United States, with new legal distribution centers opening all the time. But what does this mean for the people involved in the industry? Or users of marijuana? We spoke with two anonymous workers residing in the Bay Area, who met and fell in love in the trim scenes of Humboldt County, about some of the benefits and downsides of marijuana legalization.

Interview by Joan DeToro.

MRR: Who traditionally buys and sells weed, and how has that changed after legalization?

Pretty much everyone buys and sells weed. White growers are just buying and selling massive amounts, bigger dealers from a variety of backgrounds are selling pounds, while on the lower rung of the ladder you have small time dealers selling ounces and eighths. It's intersectional; in my teens I knew many poor white kids who sold weed and other drugs. There is a myth that white kids aren't selling drugs, but they are. The problem is that Black and brown people are the ones getting locked up for it at highly disproportionate rates and we also face harsher sentences for smaller amounts of pot. More square people are buying weed because it's legal now. Literally—there is a whole population of people who didn't buy weed simply because it was illegal. Now there is marijuana branding specifically for them.

MRR: Marijuana is being legalized throughout the US at a relatively rapid pace. What are some of the effects of legalization that people may not expect?

There are a lot of effects that people may not think of. Although this is not the case for states like Washington and Oregon, increased cost is a concern in California. Taxation rates for buying marijuana at dispensaries are substantially higher in California. This means that some are no longer able to access affordable edibles or other marijuana products. Another effect is joblessness for underground dealers and a whitewashed industry. Now that recreational use is legally sanctioned, selling of marijuana requires a license. People can and are still being arrested for selling marijuana without a license. In many states, the informal non-licensed marijuana market has completely disappeared with legalization.

The recreational marijuana industry is largely run by white men who already have access to tons of money. There are a few Black and POC owned dispensaries in Oakland, such as Magnolia, Stash Twist, and A+ Collective. Black and brown folks who have sold marijuana for years are not able to access this new industry to become legit. Many people may lose their main source of income. The Hood Incubator is an organization that seeks to "increase participation of Black and Brown people in the legal cannabis industry." According to their website, "while marijuana use is roughly equal among Blacks and white nationwide, Black people are nearly four times as likely to be arrested for marijuana possession" and "Black people make up less than 5% of founders and business owners in the industry."

Another big thing that people have overlooked is that through legalization big pharma will be growing marijuana factory farm style, which will result in loss of livelihood for growers and all those employed in the marijuana farming industry, including outdoor workers, farm managers, trimmers, and distributors. Exploitation is and always has been a major factor for those on the lower end of the marijuana industry food chain. These workers are earning less and less money as a result of legalization and as the overall value of marijuana decreases—even as costs are increasing in the dispensaries. Furthermore, this will have an ongoing negative impact on the environment and the quality of cannabis. I bet that with legalization people didn't imagine Phillip Morris or Monsanto growing weed. Lobbyists are hard at work to ensure that the

Until marijuana is decriminalized worldwide, Black and brown people will continue to be disproportionately criminalized, as investors make millions in a predominantly white recreational marijuana industry.

marijuana industry becomes ruled by corporate investors.

MRR: How has marijuana legislation affected people who process the product?

It depends on how the farm functions. Due to the price of cannabis decreasing and taxes increasing, people are generally getting paid less. There are more expenses for farms because of the requirements to operate legally. Year-round workers who grew the product in the past often received commission from growers. Now that has changed in many circumstances to a flat or hourly fee. Many hourly workers who do outdoor harvesting, weeding, building, and other work have seen their hourly rate decrease. Many farms have drastically reduced the prices they pay trimmers per pound from over $200 to around $100. Some farms have resorted to machines to cut costs. Some trim jobs in San Francisco only pay minimum wage.

MRR: Who typically makes up the population of marijuana trimmers?

It is worth noting that the marijuana industry on all levels is one that Black people have been left out of. In trim scenes there are rarely Black people present, even though that has increased in recent years. The few Black people who are trimming usually have to deal with not just micro-aggressions but overt racism at times. This can range from weird political commentary, to racial slurs, to having their work scrutinized in a harsher manner than other people.

Most people who are trimmers come from all over the country and the world. There are quite a few people who travel from seasonal picking jobs year round, such as fruit in Canada, berries in New England, and weed in Northern California. A lot of trimmers either have access to a flexible lifestyle or use trimming as one of the few options they have to make a decent amount of money because of either their lifestyle, appearance or education. There are older people, parents of people in the industry and / or just people who've been in the industry a long time—who are usually white. There are working class white people who are from the area. There are oogles, travelers, punks, artists, musicians.

There are lots of Europeans in the trim scene—people from Spain, Italy and France. They usually have an easy time finding jobs because many growers love them and think of them as exotic and cool. Not every non-American group is seen equally. There is a large population of Hmong people living in Northern California who work in the marijuana industry. Those who don't have their own grow scenes are often hired as a crew and in many cases are paid less than other workers.

We were lucky to be brought into a scene that was mostly queer women and non-binary people and quite a few POC. That was specifically because our friends, and one half of us, put in years at shitty scenes in order to move up to a place where they were being cared for and had a say in who they brought in. So much of that industry is who you know. That makes sense because it is illegal work. In addition to that, trim scenes often take place on farms that are also people's homes. A lot of trust is required on both ends. We have friends who were blindfolded on the drive up to their job site. Since so many white people only know other white people, it created a very white environment.

It is worth noting that the marijuana industry on all levels is one that Black people have been left out of.

MRR: Who do you think has historically grown weed and employed trimmers in Northern California?

In order to think of the demographics of trim scenes, we have to think of who lived in the area before marijuana started being grown, who had access to funds to buy land or start a grow operation, how safe or welcome people of color would feel buying land in those towns to grow weed. A lot of the towns were working class, white towns prior to the marijuana boom. There is a stereotype of peaceful, all-loving hippies growing weed, of towns in Northern California being these weed havens, but that's not fully true. A lot of people from the areas that are now known as the Emerald Triangle saw the influx of "hippies" and growers as a nuisance. These people were seen as intruders.

Last year, I was DJing an event during the trim season and someone from the local radio station was exalting how far the town had come. She said that white hippies with dreads would get jumped by white bikers. I kinda sneered and she went further saying, "if that's what they were doing to white people with dreads imagine what they were doing to everyone else."

I just want to note, since we talked about land ownership, that the US is a product of settler colonialism and we are living on stolen land.

MRR: Black and brown people have consistently been punished by the legal system at greater rates than white people for drug usage. Now that marijuana is becoming legalized, what is happening to people imprisoned for marijuana possession?

Proposition 64 (legalization for recreational use in CA) is supposed to be enacted retroactively meaning that thousands of people currently incarcerated for marijuana will be released. I'm not sure what the progress is on that though.

Oakland has a reparations program in place through which the city gives assistance to Oakland residents who have been convicted of marijuana charges during a certain timeframe. The Equity Permit Program applies to to Oakland residents who were jailed for offenses related to marijuana possession in the last ten years. Unfortunately, this program only applies to East Oakland residents. Even with this equity program, there are many barriers for people who qualify such as access to funds, product, and willing investors. Black and brown people continue to be disproportionately impacted by drug related offenses. Marijuana prohibition and the war on drugs continue to be devastating to communities of color across the country and internationally.

Until marijuana is decriminalized worldwide, Black and brown people will continue to be disproportionately criminalized, as investors make millions in a predominantly white recreational marijuana industry.

kohti tuhoa

Finland's Kohti Tuhoa have been blowing out eardrums and destroying minds with their brand of hardcore punk for years. We catch up with them after the release of their second album, *Pelon Neljäs Valtakunta*, available on Southern Lord and Svart.

Interview by Arto Hietikko.
Photos by Jaakko Hietakangas, Veera Uutinen, and Jussi Jänis.

MRR: First of all, can you introduce yourself? What do you do in the band, as well as outside the band, as work or hobby?
Helena Hiltunen: I'm the vocalist. I work and have a family, and all kinds of hobbies. *[laughter]* Cannot explain better.

MRR: What kind of hobbies?
Helena: Nothing special. Band life. Rock'n'roll life.

MRR: Your hobbies outside the band are all related to bands?
Helena: Well, I watch movies and TV, exercise, jog.
Markus: I'm Markus, I play drums and am studying to become a nurse while working in healthcare at the same time. Actually, I work more than I study at the moment. The work takes most of my time outside playing in bands. I also play table soccer and try to exercise as well. All of this pretty much fills my days.
Alexi: I'm Alexi and I play bass. I work as a media journalist and I go in for everything culture-related. Lots of punk activities and other activities as well.
Ville: I'm Ville, I play guitar. I work at Svart Records and handle the tours, shirts, gigs, etc. for the bands. I wish I occasionally had some time to sleep but it doesn't always come off. I'm very busy, there's a lot of music related stuff going on all the time.
Helena: Now that everybody else has told where they work, I add that I work as a Digital Communication Specialist at University of Helsinki.

MRR: You are active in other bands as well. Which bands do you have going on at this moment?
Markus: Me and Ville play in Hard Action, which is more like traditional rock music, and I also joined Kuudes Silmä at the end of the year when their drummer quit.
Alexi: Maailmanloppu, Ydinperhe, Tunnit are my bands. I need more.
Ville: Just go ahead and start one. Markus already mentioned Hard Action. Then there's a grindcore band called Death Toll 80k, although it's not very active. In addition to that, I also play in Yleiset Syyt, which is not very active either. I used to play in Perikato, which called it a day just a while ago. Later this year I might join Foreseen, but that's still a bit uncertain. We'll see.
Helena: This is my only active band at the moment.

MRR: How long has Kohti Tuhoa existed? Four years?
Markus: Approximately.

MRR: I read from somewhere that the original source of inspiration for this band was Sacrilege.
Helena: Yeah, that's right.

MRR: Which other bands have influenced your current sound?
Alexi: I cannot say that Sacrilege has influenced where we're at now. That was just a starting point.
Helena: It all started when I was drunk and listening to Sacrilege in a car and started talking about how cool it would be to have a band like this. That was the beginning.
Markus: I guess you could hear some Sacrilege influences in our early stuff, or perhaps even still, but once we started playing it started to take shape pretty fast so that…
Ville: …The songs started to become shorter.
Markus: Yeah, and perhaps noisier as well.

MRR: Was Kohti Tuhoa more like a project band in the beginning, or did you already then have in your minds that in four years you would have made a 7" and two 12"s and toured in USA and Australia?
Helena: It was more like "let's go to the rehearsal room and see what happens." There weren't any big plans. Then suddenly all these things started to take place and I was like, "what is happening here?"
Alexi: Helena had never sung in a hardcore band before, so we wanted to test how she would sound.
Helena: Those guys talked me into it. They said I should be the vocalist, while I thought we should find some better vocalist and I would play bass.
Ville: Then we heard that Alexi had just bought a new bass and amp and was looking for a band, so we got Alexi to play bass. *[laughter]*

MRR: You will soon tour Australia. How did this come up?
Helena: We played a couple of gigs with Extinct Exist on our European tour. Later their drummer Tim sent a message to me and invited us to play in Australia. I didn't know what to say, so I told him to contact Ville.
Markus: We just spent some time with them and played a couple of gigs together.
Ville: It was a minitour: Sweden, Denmark…The K-town Hardcore Fest as well.
Markus: Tim had this wild idea that we should play in Australia.
Ville: He actually asked us to tour Australia last year, but we already had the US tour booked at the same time.

MRR: Indeed, you also had a small tour in USA and Canada.
Ville: About two weeks.
Helena: Long enough.

MRR: That's how you feel?
Helena: I enjoyed it, but I'm not a person who wants to spend two months in a van. With my old bands I have usually played only weekend tours. It's not because I would become an alcoholic, it's because it would be too much for my voice.
Ville: You would probably need some days off if the tour were longer.
Helena: Yeah. That's my opinion. I think these other guys would gladly tour all the time.
Ville: I wouldn't mind spending two months in a car touring.
Alexi: I'm ready to try that, too.

MRR: How about the USA, can you name some memorable differences or resemblances with the Finnish punk scene?
Alexi: I can name one. There were some guys telling how fucking old they were. They were 30. This happened in various cities. "I already stopped playing, but I still organize shows." Some guy in a record store told me that he's so old, and he was 30. Ten years younger than me. *[laughter]* But I look young in their eyes because I don't look American.
Markus: For me, the most memorable thing was the basement shows, the house shows people organize in their homes. They have something in common with the squat shows in Europe, but still, on the whole, they are something quite different.
Ville: If you need more drinks you just go to the kitchen…
Alexi: …or you even play in the kitchen!
Helena: The kitchen show was the best, or one of the best.
Ville: Was it in Richmond?
Markus: Yeah. Those basement shows were definitely the most memorable for me.
Helena: Good atmosphere, and nice people at that show, and…Of course the other shows were good, too, but I'm not always very sociable, sometimes I'm even the opposite. At that show I felt good. I guess the stars were right.
Alexi: That's the difference between the USA and Europe: squats and basement shows are two very different worlds.
Ville: Some squats in Germany can be almost like a five-star hotel.
Alexi: Yeah, and they may have a history that goes back decades. While in the USA, the show can be in a rented house.
Helena: We were told that rich white people are now buying houses from those same areas to renovate, and they don't like hearing some bands play in their neighborhood.
Ville: So they renovate the neighborhood as well.

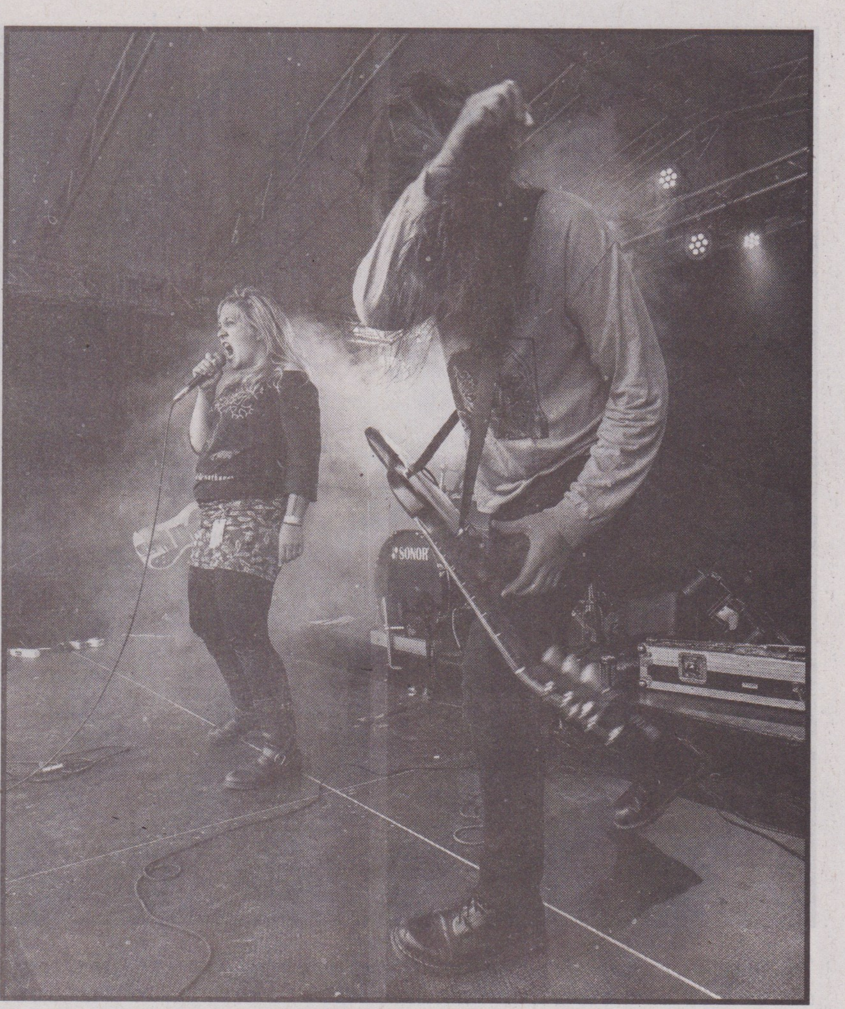
MRR: Which shows have been your personal favorites ever and why?
Helena: The BumZen show.
Markus: The BumZen show, if I have to name one.
Ville: Yeah, BumZen in 2015.
Alexi: It was the last show of our European tour. A great place and great people.
Ville: The ceiling was full of shoe marks after that show. It was wild.
Helena: The show at the Puntala fest was really good as well. Even I can say that I'm satisfied about it.

MRR: It was a great show. A Russian friend of mine stood beside me during the show and when it was over we were both like, "Wow!"
Ville: The darkness fell just before our turn, which was very appropriate.
Markus: I had the worst strategy ever that day. Our set time was so late, I kind of thought "I'm able to drink until nine or ten and then switch to low-alcohol beer," but it was…Never again.
Alexi: Then you had to struggle to play.
Helena: I had the best strategy ever. I didn't drink before the show at all. After our set I opened a bottle of bubbly.

MRR: What about your records, have you been satisfied with them, and have they turned out like you wanted them to be?
Ville: I think they are closer and closer to what we want every time. Especially production-wise, and the songs too, naturally. The thing about songs is that you always try to do something a bit different, and production-wise you try to get a better sound.
Markus: I think we have succeeded in reaching what we have wanted in every release, at least in my opinion. And we have also always moved forward instead of repeating ourselves.
Alexi: Of course we could always do it even better.
Markus: Yeah, of course.

MRR: At least you've got lots of praising reviews. I don't think anybody has said anything bad about you.
Helena: I'm sure some do. All the time. *[laughter]*
Alexi: At least behind our backs.

MRR: You get more praise than negative comments anyway. Is it embarrassing to hear all that praise?



Helena: Not necessarily, because I hear how we move forward in every release, but at the same time there are always some flaws and I'm like "why, for fuck's sake, didn't I notice that the first time around?" and "next time I'll do better"—and then I make the same mistakes again.
Alexi: That sucks. And it just repeats every time.
Helena: It's endless suffering. An abyss of self-criticism.

MRR: Do you think bands with members already known from their other bands automatically get a better reception compared to bands with new people?
Markus: Partly that may be so. It's always refreshing to see new faces, though.
Ville: I wish there would be more new people, especially younger people. I think there is some prejudice against someone new who doesn't know anybody and tries to get a gig. People want to know who are these guys and what is this band. Or when somebody forms a new band, the first question often is who plays in it.
Alexi: On the other hand, it's very human to think that if someone has put out quality stuff in the past, he / she will make more quality stuff later. In that way it's very human.
Ville: Yeah. I have bought some records because I knew the band members put out quality stuff earlier.

MRR: Then there's also this terrible "ex-members of..." text / sticker on the record cover thing. *[laughter]*
Helena: That's about the most embarrassing ever *[laughter]*
Alexi: Not *yet*!
Ville: But yeah, I guess you're always automatically interested in what your friends do.
Helena: Sure, and everybody, and every band, has to work to reach a certain level... I'm sure you understand what I'm trying to say.

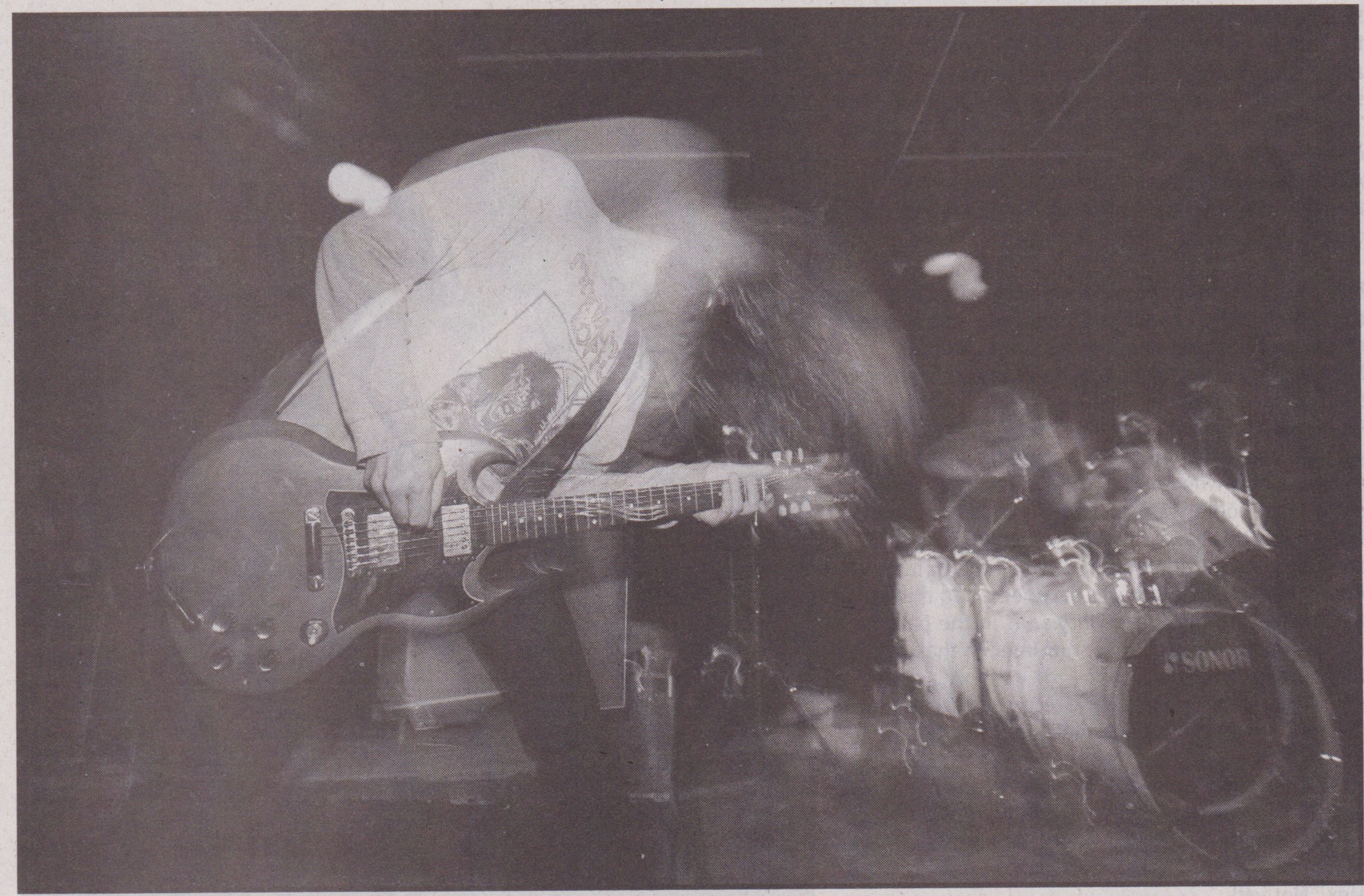
MRR: Very often when a new band comes around you note that it consists of certain previously familiar members. It's occasionally very refreshing when there's a new band and—unexpectedly—the members are previously unknown.
Alexi: Yes, and that's why it's pleasant to tour abroad, for example. You see bands you know nothing about beforehand and you have no expectations.
Ville: But I guess it's the same for example in New York, where everybody plays in five bands. Take the Toxic State label for example, there's a handful of people doing everything.
Alexi: Surely it's the same in every country.

MRR: Your lyrics. Where do you find your inspiration?
Helena: From the emotional distress caused by society, and from my internal anxieties.
Alexi: Well defined.
Helena: Also, Alexi is a creative lyric writer. My way to write lyrics is to write down a line that popped into my head and start building the lyrics around it.

MRR: They are quite pessimistic, aren't they.
Helena: Well yeah, I'm pretty much a pessimist, as well as that gentleman there. *[pointing at Alexi] [laughter]*
Alexi: With this kind of music, you have to be. It's just a stylistic thing. Test-proven during the decades this genre has existed.

MRR: You think everything is lost and we're on the way to destruction?
Ville: I have to admit that I'm very pessimistic about it.
Alexi: You can always try to turn the direction, but...
Helena: I try to think positively because of my child, but it isn't easy.

MRR: "The light shines in the darkness, far away."
Helena: Yes, exactly. *[laughter]* Indeed.
Alexi: Really far away.
Helena: Right now it feels very dark. Especially in a social context.
Ville: Every time I think everything is going to hell, something new comes up and makes things even worse, speeding up the process.
Helena: I checked out Laura Huhtasaari's Facebook page today, which was a really bad move, but I just wanted to see what her supporters think.
[Note: this interview was conducted in the middle of Finnish presidential election. The extremist far-right Finns Party candidate was Laura Huhtasaari, who is a creationist populist inspired by President Trump. She believes Finland should close its borders to migrants and openly encourages direct violence and hatred against migrants and minorities.]
Ville: Did you watch her new campaign video? That was pretty unbelievable.
Helena: Yeah, I watched the video too. Depressing.
Alexi: Brain-melting.
Helena: The impression it gave was that they are allowed to have opinions, but there's no room for our opinions. What was that video...
Alexi: You mean that "mediamonsteri"?
[Note: In her YouTube animation video Laura Huhtasaari attacked a



"media monster," implying that media is a threat to freedom of speech and she is the heroine who crushes this monster.]
Helena: Yeah, "mediamonsteri." I don't know...We live in very confusing times.

MRR: Do you wait for the end of the world, or are you afraid of it?
Helena: Yesterday, or was it today, there was a news about these scientists' Doomsday Clock reaching two minutes to midnight, midnight being civilization's destruction.
Alexi: The Doomsday Clock is ticking forward.
Ville: This Doomsday Clock is now as close to the end of the world as it was in the 1950s, plus the state of environment is now much worse.
Helena: Politics is very concerning, but the state of environment concerns me possibly the most.
Markus: At times I think about what would happen before people on a large scale start to think about their routines to even slightly change the direction.
Ville: Hard to say. I guess it would be something big. Today there was news about an African city *[Cape Town]* running out of drinking water. Think about it, a city running out of drinking water...As a Finn, it feels unbelievable because we are used to always having drinkable water. And somewhere else it just does not exist anymore.

MRR: What would you do if you could do anything, if you had the power to turn the world into some kind of utopian world? What should be done?
Helena: The first step would be to end the meat industry. We need radical changes like that. In any case, that is the worst thing and that's scientifically known. Next: to invest in female education and to add birth control and family planning knowledge. Global recycling laws?
Ville: It has to be something real radical like this if you really want to change anything.
Markus: Of course, it's difficult to tell as the conditions are so diverse in different parts of the globe. That's why the changes cannot be as radical in all over the world.
Ville: Yeah, you can't buy seitan burgers from a grocery store everywhere.
Markus: It's hard to name just one guiding principle, but those are good points.

MRR: What about the rise of the far right during the last ten years here and there in Western countries? Your lyrics deal with it quite a lot. Do you have something to say about it?
Ville: It is quite alarming.
Alexi: It is said in our lyrics, we wouldn't have written them otherwise.
Ville: It's odd when you notice how your old schoolmates and also your relatives start to deliver strong anti-immigrant messages.
Helena: Or even your parents, unfortunately. Then you have to correct them, to put the things in order.
Ville: Right. When I visit my folks in Lappeenranta, occasionally I still hear a lot of Russophobic talk, and I have to point out that it's not very appropriate. Apparently this old sentiment raises its head over and over again.
Markus: What I'm most confused about is the discussion about "the two extremist sides": the far-right and the anti-racists, when this other "extreme" side, anti-racism, is something I consider as something very universal, normal, human, and now they try to direct the discussion into two extremes.
Helena: Yeah, but it's clear there's an agenda behind it.
Markus: Yes, of course.
Helena: They want the far right ideas to become accepted and presentable for people. That's what's in the background.

Markus: Yeah, they become ordinary.
Alexi: It's a part of normalization.

MRR: It's hard to know which is the right way to react: should we just turn the other cheek and "win them over with love"—and let the far right / fascists / nazis grow in strength, or should we punch them hard—with the result that suddenly anti-fascists are "as bad as the nazis"? Whatever you do, sometimes it feels like it's always wrong.
Ville: I don't see violence as the answer to the far-right problem either. Usually it just makes the situation worse. The solution is somewhere else.
Helena: People were really terrified when somebody only spat on the ground and was physically assaulted by Eppu Torniainen, so in a way Torniainen did a disservice to the nazis. I'm just pissed because he only got two years and three months.
[Note: In September 2016 Eppu Torniainen, a member of a nazi group called the Nordic Resistance Movement, killed a passer-by during their street event in Helsinki. The passer-by had stopped in front of the group and spat on the ground. Torniainen kicked the man in the chest and he fell to the ground, hit his head and died six days after the incident. The court convicted Torniainen on a lesser charge of aggravated assault in December and he was sentenced to two years in jail. Soon after the incident more than 15,000 people gathered in Helsinki to protest against racism and violence.]
Ville: Today they gave him a few months more. But still nothing for manslaughter, which is not a good thing. It's sad that it has to go this far, that someone has to die before the so-called ordinary people wake up. You would think they would wake up a bit earlier.

MRR: If those people have woken up even now, which I doubt.
Alexi: No, the far-right propaganda immediately started to spread a story that the victim died of drugs.
Ville: Yeah, it was possibly only a temporary awakening.

MRR: "Saatanan lampaat," that's a nice choice for a cover song.
Ville: It was Alexi's proposal, I think.
Alexi: The Painajainen 7" is my old favorite.
Ville: It's a good 7".
Alexi: I was in junior high school and on an excursion when I bought it from Oskun Divari *[now defunct record shop in Helsinki]* and ever since then I have loved it. So I suggested that we could cover that song and everybody was up for it.
Markus: It was a bit different song than what we do and fits on the LP quite well, in between our own songs.
Ville: It brings balance to the LP in some degree.
Markus: By the way, have we played other cover songs besides this?
Alexi: No, except those couple of Sacrilege songs before we had our own songs.
Helena: And Discharge. At rehearsals.
Alexi: Oh yeah. But that was when we were just trying to see how it would be to play together.

MRR: The sheep theme ["Saatanan lampaat" means "You Fucking Sheep" in English] suits you well, as you've got sheep in a couple of your own songs as well.
Helena: Yeah, I already thought that from now on we really have to stop using them because there are too many sheep in our lyrics now.
Markus: The animal theme of our third 12" will be pigs. Or wolves.
Ville: Something about kangaroos for the Australian tour. *[laughter]*
Alexi: Yeah. "You fucking koalas!" *[laughter]*

MRR: Let's talk a bit about Finnish punk scene. It has been really good for many years, in my opinion.
Alexi: You mean the music scene.

MRR: Yeah, the emphasis seems to be on music, instead of anarchist activities, for example.
Ville: There are those as well, to some extent. Possibly more in Helsinki.
Alexi: And it's perhaps a separate thing from music. They do not go hand in hand at all.

MRR: Yeah, they are partially the same people involved, partially not.
Alexi: If you go, for example, to Kupoli *[a venue in Helsinki]* to see bands, you see lots of people you have never seen before. And they are there just because it's a benefit show. Whereas here in Lepakkomies *[the club where Kohti Tuhoa had a show the night they were interviewed]* it's pretty much just beer and music that interests the audience.

MRR: What should there be more of in this scene? Or less?
Ville: More good venues to play, perhaps, especially here in Helsinki. At least I am starting to get tired of Lepakkomies. I wish Helsinki had a punk bar such as Vastavirta in Tampere.
Alexi: That's what we miss here.
Ville: I think there hasn't been such place in Helsinki since Lepakko. *[Lepakko (or Lepakkoluola) was squatted in 1979 and turned into a lively venue for music and culture until the building was demolished in 1999]*
Markus: Oranssi is a good place and there's a good atmosphere, but there's no bar and it also has certain limits.
Ville: It would be nice to have a new place, and it has been under work for some years now.
Alexi: You've heard about Loukko?

MRR: Yeah.
Alexi: It's in the upstairs of Oranssi. There's supposed to be a bar and all, but some more money is needed to finish the renovation.

MRR:It sounds good.
Alexi: Yeah! Tens of thousands of euros are still needed. But we already have 20,000. And Oranssi has offered to give the room to use, and there is going to be co-operation with them later. They are very positive about it. As a matter of fact, I'm already involved in Loukko.

MRR: That's what I heard.
Alexi: That's one of those punk activities I mentioned in the beginning of the interview.
Ville: I would like to see more young bands. I mean, there are certainly some, but I just don't know them because you rarely see them at gigs at Lepakkomies. Possibly partly because they don't know how to get booked. I'd love to go to a hardcore gig with a band of 15-year-olds who totally blow me away and I'd be like "what a kick-ass band!"

MRR: You often see young punks very unexpectedly. And after that you don't see them for a long time.
Ville: Yeah. I think there were mostly about 35-year-olds at the shows at the new Oranssi, but then gradually the younger people found it as well. I think there are some who are under 18 at its gigs nowadays. That's a very positive thing.

MRR: Is there anything else exciting happening in Helsinki besides Oranssi and soon Loukko? What's happening here, and is it worth moving here?
Ville: *[laughter]* Quite many probably would say no, but I guess it depends on the person.
Helena: Why not, if you find the right people and something meaningful to do? Then this city is OK.
Ville: For a while I kept saying that I didn't want to move to Helsinki.

Markus: Yeah, same thing here.
Ville: Then I moved here about eight years ago and I have felt like home here.
Alexi: Definitely worth moving to. We all live here and there are other nice people here as well.
Helena: It's also easy to be vegan here.

MRR: That's true.
Alexi: And there's The National Audiovisual Institute's archive cinema and all...
Helena: Good libraries, and all kinds of happenings, and if you're considering moving here there are all kinds of activities for children too.

MRR: OK, I'll move if I find a job there.
Alexi: But it's expensive. Especially rent and housing prices.

MRR: At tonight's gig, the bands *[Kohti Tuhoa, Death Race, Kovaa Rasvaa, Uhrit]* are quite alike, but usually you can see bands with very different styles or from different genres at the same gig in Finland.
Helena: That's cool.

MRR: I think the scene here is definitely not as much divided into separated subgenres as in many other countries.
Alexi: This night is almost an exception. Patu *[who organized the show]* just happened to want these bands this time.

MRR: I read from the Abortti 13 interview in *MRR* recently that scene is very divided. They even told an example about someone who had a mohawk going to a skate punk gig and getting pushed around with "what are you doing here, you're a hardcore punk, go away!"
All: *[laughter]*

MRR: I was reading that with my mouth open: "what the fuck?"
Helena: That must be some kind of joke. Or perhaps there were some local rednecks.
Aleksi: Or if you are a punk with a mohawk and you are drunk as a skunk and you keep on falling into people then even I would say "get the fuck out of here!" Then you can go and tell to your friends that those damn skate punks didn't accept you at the show.
Ville: It depends very much on what was the situation.
Markus: I don't think the scene here is divided.
Helena: Definitely not! I think it's great that everybody cooperates instead of separating.
Ville: There are gigs with both punk and metal bands all the time and everybody approves it.
Helena: Yeah, and electro and rap and all kinds of stuff.
Markus: It's partly a result of certain people crossing over the boundaries between musical genres. There are lots of my friends and people I know...
Ville: ...who all play different kinds of music.
Markus: In which case it makes it easier to have mixed-genre shows.

MRR: There are quite many different sub-genres in your other bands as well.
Markus: Indeed. And when Hard Action toured in Europe last year, we played at least some gigs at squats together with hardcore punk bands, so I think this mixed-genre thing worked quite well there too.
Ville: Yeah, we had gigs at Zoro, in Leipzig, and some other squats.
Ville: And after the hardcore punk bands the DJ played stuff like Thin Lizzy, etc.
Helena: Sure. People are listening to a wide range of music.
Alexi: When people get older, they are not so opinionated any more. They are more open-minded.

MRR: Are you pointing at me? *[the interviewer is very well known about his dislike of metal music]*
All: *[laughter]*
Alexi: No, but...You know what I mean.

MRR: What good bands are there in Finland at the moment, such bands you'd like to bring out?
Helena: Radux.
Ville: Are they still playing?
Helena: I don't know, but I think they're a good band.
Ville: They have been looking for a drummer for a long time now.
Helena: Oh? Rainbowlicker.
Markus: I think Rue Morgue is a good new band.
Ville: Sick Urge is a good band too.
Helena: Sick Urge is good.
Ville: As I listen to grindcore and noise to some extent, I have to say that I'm excited about Happivaje, which is a new band from Joensuu. Those guys are in their early twenties. Death Toll 80k played at a same gig with them, and Kohti Tuhoa has played with them too. For once I was excited to hear some really good Finnish grindcore. Usually grindcore here sounds like modern metal, but Happivaje sounds more like old Napalm Death, more punk than metal. It's a good band.

MRR: What have you got planned after you come back from the Australian tour?
Markus: New songs.
Alexi: And we also have a short Scandinavian tour planned with a good band called Kovaa Rasvaa.
Markus: In March.
Alexi: About five shows, the last one is at the Dead Rhythm Fest. Death Side are playing the same night.
Helena: Then we play a May Day gig in Berlin.
Ville: At the May Day fest at Köpi. The Noc Walpurgii Fest.
Alexi: And yeah, we will write new songs.
Helena: I'm looking forward to spend some time in rehearsal.

MRR: What will the new songs be like? What will your next record be like?
Markus: There will be less D-beat on it. That's all I know.
Ville: That's probably what we have been talking about.
Alexi: But this is only speculation. We'll see what kind of songs they will be. But it will be different.

MRR: You mean you're not going to wear a Destrucktions shirt on the cover of the next record?
Alexi: I told Ville that I have the same shirt on, but he was like "nevermind."
Ville: *[laughter]* You've got the same bass on it, too, anyway.
Alexi: Yeah, the same bass and probably the same shoes too.
Helena: And the same glasses. By all means, it's the same guy. The same shirt year after year.
Alexi: It's stuck on.
Ville: You probably have a wardrobe full of those shirts. Nothing but Destrucktions shirts...But for real, I guess we will make something different again. I think all our releases have a distinctive personality of their own, in a way. The first 7" was really noisy with lots of distortion, whereas the first LP sounded a bit cleaner, and the songs were not as long any more. And the new LP is stylistically more like traditional Finnish hardcore punk.
Markus: Do we have long songs?
Ville: On the first 7" the songs are quite long.
Markus: Which songs are there?
Ville: It's probably as long as the first LP.
Markus: Oh yeah, there are couple of long songs.

Ville: There's "Koe tuskaa" and…
Markus: I'm not able to play them because they are so lengthy.
Helena: They have parts without vocals and I'm like, "what the fuck am I doing on this stage?"
Ville: It would be cool if we were able to add some kind of new element to our music. Or to find some kind of new direction.
Alexi: We have all kinds of ideas, but we need to test them first. You cannot make anything involuntarily. Or you can, but it's not worth it.
Ville: It would be great if this band sounded original. So that it wouldn't sound like Discharge or something.

MRR: Don't you sound quite original?
Ville: Yeah, but I have a feeling that it's the vocals that make it sound original. If we had some ordinary vocalist and the vocals were arranged in a very normal way it would sound much more…
Alexi: …ordinary.
Ville: Yes. I think it's always great when some new original hardcore bands appear, like for example those bands from the Spanish scene: Una Bèstia Incontrolable, Barcelona, and other bands like that. They somehow sound so original.
Alexi: Yeah. They sound really interesting.

MRR: These were the questions. I missed some and to some you answered even before I asked. You can now say something nice at the end.
Helena: Nice at the end. I'm hopeless at this…

MRR: "Greetings to the readers."
Helena: Yeah. Yeah.
Ville: And greetings to the fans and…
Markus: *[laughter]* No, no, no…

MRR: Up the punx.
Helena: Can't think of anything. It's nice that there has been interest towards this band. We will try to do our best.

MRR: When you come back from Australia, we will do another interview for *Toinen Vaihtoehto* [the interviewer's zine]…
All: *[laughter]*

MRR: …if you are still together.
Helena: I believe we will be.
Ville: Or you can do individual interviews of us all.
Markus: The interview will be much more interesting if we come back fighting.

MRR: Right, on the way to make your solo albums.
Helena: I have to say that this band will be all right, because everyone does their job so well. There's no cause for complaints about any of us ruining a show or something.
Ville: You can trust that nobody ever suddenly gets crazy and disappears in an unfamiliar city or something like that.
Alexi: Just a little bit crazy. Then it's fun.
Ville: Yeah, everyone gets the job done anyway.

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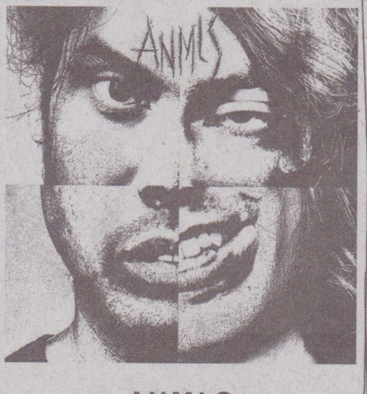

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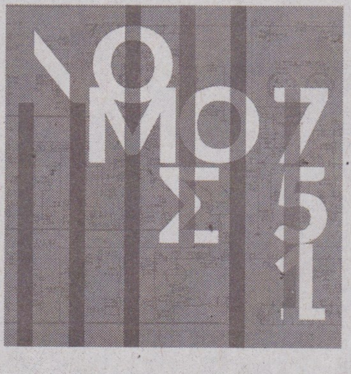

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COMING UP NEXT: SUBSONICS *FLESH COLORED PAINT*
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ALL TORN UP!

In late 2017 we sat down to interview the NYC punk group All Torn Up! ATU had just put out their "Social Immolation" 7" on FtLP Records. They had also just returned from a tour in Europe with Leftöver Crack and were about to head to Canada where they would do a short tour opening for the Subhumans (UK).

Ira interviewed 3/5ths of ATU: guitarists Marcello (Cello) Amati, Jason Tancer, and lead vocalist Joey Steel, while drummer Sören Thode and bassist Philippe LeSaux were not able to be at the interview. While most of the interview appears here, part was left off for space. You can hear those parts left out, where ATU talk about Trump, how they all ended up in NYC, and, of course, burning football jerseys, on Joey Steel's free podcast Dispatches from the Underground.

Interview and introduction by Ira Cogan.

Photos by Kristin Laughter and Saidy Lopez.

MRR: So, you've been around since roughly 2008, you've got six releases under your belt.
Jason Tancer: I definitely didn't know that.

MRR: What do you know now that you didn't know, between the demo days and today, about how to do what you're doing?
Joey Steel: Yeah, well, I've learned how to sing more since then. Cello, me, and Soren have been together making music since like, maybe 2006—no, 2007. And Jason, you joined us like, six months ago. [*laughter*]
Jason: About yesterday, maybe? No, I think I joined in 2013.

MRR: Okay. Well, [Jason] before we get to that, how did you get into these guys?
Jason: I met Joey at a show against police brutality—

MRR: So, activism from the very beginning?
Joey: No, it was a show. It was an All Torn Up! show. We'd been looking for a second guitar player for years.

MRR: So, prior to that, Cello, you did most of the songwriting? Or do you guys write together, or...?
Cello Amati: It's a complicated—

MRR: You've been with the band more or less since the beginning, right?
Cello: Yeah. I answered a Craigslist ad in 2006 or whenever it was, and these guys had already been playing together. But as far as like, the songwriting aspect, we kind of all just contribute equally.
Joey: Back then I just went in there and ripped my throat and left and couldn't talk for two days and then I came back. So I think we're a lot more serious about the music now, as opposed to just playing it as hard and weird as possible.
Cello: Yes, and I think a lot of the songwriting now has a lot of thought built into it. Especially now that we have Jason, thinking of writing leads as opposed to just playing rhythm. Like every other band, I feel like we evolved over time.

MRR: Did you have a specific message you were going for in those days? Has it changed? Has your worldview changed since the beginning?
Joey: The world has definitely not gotten any better, for sure. But lyrically, All Torn Up! started off consciously political, but I made sure I wasn't writing everything that I personally believed. I tried to write, as much as possible, for all of us.

I write songs I feel like, reflect our outlooks overall. Obviously, I'm writing most of the lyrics, so my ideas are getting in there more than others'—but I just try to be really sensitive to the fact that I can't just say what I want to say. Because if it was just me—and I do that more with some other bands—if it was just me doing serious political songs, they would sound way more violent and ugly and I'd probably be in jail already for that shit.

But I think trying to capture overall what we feel, in terms of changing, we've changed a ton. All of us have changed, the world has changed. I think our lyrics have also gotten a lot more complicated, a lot more philosophical. I try to be as concrete as possible. But it's hard because we all disagree on things so I try to also keep it philosophically in one direction

that we can all agree with, and maybe the particulars, folks disagree with.

I'm a communist—obviously, no one else in the band is a communist—and kind of no one else in the world—

MRR: *[laughter]* I did not know that.

Joey: Yeah. No one else in the world, but the songs themselves, the content, isn't necessarily communist or even anarchist or even— well...actually...I do think it *is* anti-capitalist.

Basically, if people see oppression, if people see something wrong, we want to engage it and we want to uplift them and help them know that they can do something to change that. And give them some options about what it would take to have some real, systematic, deep-down, deep-rooted radical change. And other than encouraging that, I would say there's not much we have to say other than it's deeper than they think. But—you know, my personal views are obviously a little more harsh than that.

Cello should say something about how the music has changed too.

Cello: Yeah, a lot of that songwriting in our previous album *Drone Life* was like, a transition period. We had our bassist, Philippe, I brought over from this other band that I had played in that we really clicked, so with that album you could definitely see the turning point, if you know our music. Like, you can tell from the older stuff, as far as the different style of music we're playing, from *Drone Life* on. You can kind of how see where we're heading to.

Jason came along and he fit right in. Philippe and I, we've been playing for years. And you know, I've been playing with these guys for years. So, when I convey an idea, or anyone else conveys an idea, people get it. It's not really difficult to explain, but you can see—I mean, it's hard to pinpoint specifics of what has changed, but you can tell if you listen to the record. Like, there'll be you know—

Joey: I feel like, musically and politically, we're trying to fill a void that we think is there in punk and in culture, and that's—I feel like we don't talk about things that other bands are talking about, or at least we don't talk about them in ways that other people are talking about them, and also—

Cello: I agree.

Joey: —musically, we do the same thing. We more and more try to say like, all right, no one's really doing this. Or they're doing it, but they're not doing it with this band. Or they're, you know what, no one would ever do this this way. Like, no one's going to do that stuff. We just wrote a song the other day that Philippe brought a riff in, and I'm like, you know that kind of sounds a little stoner-metalish—and now it's gone toward like, a stoner, metalish hardcore tune. And it's very different. I don't think any punk band, any hardcore punk band that has ever come out of New York City, would ever touch this riff in a million fucking miles. But it sounds good.

Cello: But honestly, that's the kind of thing that draws me personally to like some of the new songs because I'm like oh, it's different, it's challenging.

MRR: So, you're not necessarily trying to follow already pre-defined forms of what you're supposed to do—you're just doing what you're doing.

Cello: Yeah, we just take the influences of what, you know, what we like or love, and apply it with our own spin on it.

MRR: Typically, I've seen at your live shows, you have a tendency to rant about the Serenity Prayer, before you start that song. Now in my humble opinion, I think you're entirely missing the point of the Serenity Prayer in your rant. Tell me why I'm wrong.

Joey: So you're talking about our song "Curse God" which is in part about the Serenity Prayer. I look at that—my mother on her deathbed had that prayer sitting next to her head. And I've always had a ton of bitterness against that. The irony of her, in her last days, looking at that and being like "oh, you know, I just don't have the strength to do this anymore." I think she did. You know, she fought it as far as she could. So, there's some personal sentiment with that, but it's about the fact that religion has trained all of these well-meaning, well-intentioned people to simply look at the things that they can't initially change, and to think that they can't do it.

MRR: So, there is overuse of it. I always looked at it like say, you're terminally ill and this is the end, it's about accepting that so you can fucking get on with your life, with all the other shit.

Joey: Why accept that? I don't understand accepting the things you can't change. Look, I know this is a little insensitive to some people, but to me, that prayer, and all prayers have been used to subjugate people and especially women—and that one prayer is such a biting example of something that people look to it for strength, but ironically, it has been used to help them accept the things that they can change. Far more than anything else.

I don't want to bat religion away from people who are looking into it for strength. But so often, it's not a picture of strength.We can change far more than we think we can change. That's the truth. That's the reality. And that one prayer and so many others are being utilized to get us to think that we shouldn't, or we can't. And so maybe there is strength people are getting from that; I don't really give a fuck. That's their business. The real issue is we need to stop thinking that there's stuff we can't change.

But Jason, this is a little bit of a touchy subject when I wrote it.
Jason: You know, I agree with both sides. I've been sober for six and a half years, and the Serenity Prayer is something that's used widely throughout twelve-step programs, so when Ira says, you know, you're terminally ill, you accept things. You know, you accept that you're terminally ill so you can get on with it. I had to come to an acceptance that I can't drink or get high. Because every single time I do it, it leads me to the exact same place. Granted, on the other side, people will use that and say "oh, there's other things that I can't change," and they use it as a cop-out.

I think it really depends on the person and what you're using it for. Sure, there are certain things that you can't change. We're all going to die one day. You know, at least in this lifetime, until science comes up with something better to keep us going on and on and on. Same thing—I can't drink or get high. I can't change that. I can't change the internal makeup of my brain and how it works. Maybe science one day will.

But at the same time, even if they did, my life is so good today, at least internally, I don't even know if I'd want to get high or drunk again. Because what I have today is pretty cool, you know? Most days, I like who I am. So I see the Serenity Prayer from both sides.
Joey: The thing to me is that—where is the reality of this prayer? People put it there so they can get on with their daily life. And their daily life is usually putting up with brutal oppression.

And so, if that's their daily life, then maybe there are good people who are using it for good reasons and they're deriving strength from it, and that's fine. I'm not going to rip it off their walls. But to me, the reality is, most people look to that as a source of strength, and it's a source of them being stronger to put up with oppression. That's not strength that we need. We need strength to destroy oppression.
Jason: I also think it goes back that it depends on what we're using this for, and what we're accepting or tolerating, you know? If you want to talk about it from a political standpoint, sure, yeah, don't accept it. Fight until you either die or get what you want. But if it's something that affects your day-to-day life, whether it's drugs and alcohol, whether it's anxiety—anything that affects you performing to the best of your ability, day-to-day, to fight towards those things, then that's where I think sure, if you need to find strength in that, go ahead so you continue to do good for the world.
Joey: One thing is, we're all atheists and this band is something we're committed to, something we want to bring out more. We think a lot of bands don't bring it out enough. Even though they're atheists.

MRR: I agree. We need more atheist bands.

Joey: We need more atheist culture too, and the fact that there aren't more bands promoting atheism explicitly, and maybe it's rhetorical because there's so many atheists in the punk scene, but you know what, that could change, It is changing, and it needs to be said more.

But, I will say, on every album we've ever put out has been Malcolm X, who is not an atheist. And to me, I think he's probably the most heroic, greatest speaker, one of the greatest minds to ever have been raised in these borders that we live in. And so, one of the reasons we put that on there to me, is to say look, we're atheists, but it doesn't mean you have to be an atheist to do good things. You can be saying the Serenity Prayer; you can be out there preaching—even a nationalist. Not an oppressive nationalist, but he [Malcolm X] *was* a black nationalist.

Or being a preacher or being Muslim or being whatever, and do good. And in fact, I think one of the greatest people who ever lived in these borders is someone who disagrees with on almost everything I believe. So, you know, it's complicated. The religion stuff is definitely complicated, but...more atheists.

MRR: So, when you speak about "we need more atheist bands," and where All Torn Up! I guess falls into opposition, the opposition that is rising against power structures that oppress people, what do you wish other bands were doing more of? How does the scene suck?
Joey: I think a lot of it isn't the kids actually. I think the kids want there to be more politics brought into their music, but there's a lot of people who are looking to make money, and they're looking to fit into the already-established mainstream of punk culture, so they don't want to ruffle any feathers. So, they want to just do like drunk punk-fucks way too often. And so, that makes more money, that's more popular, that's the party thing, so it's easier. But I think actually a lot of younger people want there to be more rebelliousness in punk, and more explicit consciousness in punk.

I think the main thing, the reason the punk scene sucks so much—first of all, it's doesn't suck overall.

MRR: *[laughter]* OK.
Joey: We make punk music because we love punk culture. I believe in punk culture, in the potential of punks. But I do think that there are huge problems in the punk scene. I think the whole phenomenon of people getting wasted and turning off at shows is bullshit.

These are places that we come together and find so much community, but then we tune out to each other at those places, or we get belligerently wasted at those places. I'm not saying don't drink, what I'm saying is when we do, we should realize that we're

around family and friends. And so often we get fucked up that we never see that. And we don't talk to the strangers around us.

This is our community. And we don't have enough punk culture, enough punks out there that are in positions of leadership doing that. Instead, they're worried about what they look like, and how much mascara they're wearing, and what gauge shoestring they wear on their fucking forehead.

MRR: Don't forget the spikes on the jacket.

Joey: Yeah, look, wear all that shit, do all that shit, that's fine. But there's something more essential to being a punk that we are not grasping, and that is the culture that we appreciate, the people who gather around this music, they're amazing people. And that should be appreciated and empowered and made as conscious as possible, so that we can actually have a culture that tears away from the mainstream. And too often the superficial bullshit and the drunk-punk culture get us swallowed up.

We should be an empowering, confrontational, counter-cultural community, not just a reflection of the mainstream we have rejected. Sadly, we reproduce those relations *far* too much. We should hold ourselves to a different standard and empower people.

I think there are a lot of negative trends in punk scenes that we need to combat against. Not destroy. I don't think we should destroy them. I don't think we should do only sober shows. I don't think we should throw out someone out who's wearing head-to-toe studs. I just think we should represent something different.

MRR: OK.

Joey: Ira's making these fucking faces when I'm talking—like I'm an asshole.

MRR: Well, yeah, because I couldn't disagree more with like about half of that.

Joey; *[laughter]* Half is not bad.

MRR: I think I just like going out and drinking and rocking out. I don't get as granular as you do. I think there is a place for that, and that's a beautiful thing, those kinds of shows. But I'm also glad the stupid shit exists, too.

Joey: We're not against fun, okay. Well, maybe I personally am, but the band is not against fun. We want people to have fun at shows. We believe in it. You know, we've toured with punks who know how to have fun, like Days N Daze and Leftöver Crack—we're not against fun. *We love those folks.* We also enjoy having fun at shows. And I'm not trying to make every show a sober space.

But I do think it's a much more meaningful experience, even while you're partying and having fun, to see that the people standing next to you are part of your community, and to that they're with you on a deeper level than just having fun together. I'm not trying to turn everything into a political lecture. I just think that there's not enough punks who are appreciating how complex and full of potential our punk scene is.

MRR: Not so "big picture, change the world," but anything... What specific thing do you think, a concrete, tangible thing, somebody could do to help make this place a better place?

Jason: I think if we stop thinking so much about "I" and think more about "we." Human nature is to be selfish and to think about survival, but if we can think about taking care of each other and helping out one another and be a little more selfless, that's a huge step to going towards a positive direction.

MRR: Where do you see yourselves participating in punk as a form of oppositional culture? And how do you fit into the legacy of punk where you live?

Joey: We just got back from Europe with Leftöver Crack, and we had a taste of how different it is over there. So I think speaking for punk culture in America, we need more confrontation and more community, and I think All Torn Up!, being about empowering conscious communication, empowering conscious shows, empowering conscious music, I think we bring both those things.

We need to more harshly confront each other about the bullshit we hang onto in our own culture and from the mainstream, and also, we need to fucking realize that we're a community. It's not just a bunch of disparate individuals hanging out at the same bar. We are a community of people. We don't have borders, but all the fucking better.

Jason: I think oppositional culture, or music, is thought-provoking. It's thought-provoking against the mainstream of New York—the entire world, really. Also, I think it's keeping with the DIY ethic. Sure, we've played bigger shows, but everything we do, we do ourselves. Joey does a lot.

MRR: That's what he brings to the table?

Jason: Yeah. He does a lot of stuff for our band. There's a huge Latino scene that we're a part of. One of our songs, "No Man's Land," the lyrics are in Spanish: "*la chat la migra, la misma porqueria*," which is "the pigs, the immigration officers, it's all the same shit."

MRR: "We're all illegal."

Jason: Yeah, we are. And it's showing support. It doesn't matter who you are, whether you're religious, atheist, black, brown, white, it doesn't matter what your race is, your background is. We're a community. We all have one common purpose: we want to change the world for the better. And we all want to support each other.

Joey: And *move forward*, not just support for support's sake. End the backwards shit that holds us back and move forward. And we want to have some fucking fun doing it.

That's the hard thing—I think when we challenge political folks, they don't realize that they can have fun doing this, that they can have a community of people who care about each other. It's all ideas and confrontation, but we can actually have a community and have fun together. That's one thing.

Just because we're having fun doesn't mean we can't be conscious, and we can't care about each other and treat each other better than we've been trained to be treated. We're trying to bridge those two and really bring those two together. And I think for all of us, we've been super fucking lucky in New York City to be embraced by the Latino punk culture here.

And they put their arms around us so lovingly. Even though there's no Latinos in this band, and the fact that we've been so immersed in the culture here with them is, honestly to me, it brings tears to my eyes just thinking about how wonderful they've been to us. And it's because we're so upfront and honest about our viewpoints and who we are and what we represent. And we want to go. Not because we're fucking white-ass dudes, but because it doesn't matter about where we're from, it's where we're trying to go.

And they're trying to go to the same place we are—a community that's empowering and conscious and cares about each other and has fun doing it. And that's why they've been so caring to us and good to us. And I would say that we're much more involved in that side of the New York culture, the Latino punk scene here, than New York hardcore. Latino punk shows, that's the only places that we've ever really felt home. That's why I have always been uncomfortable calling us hardcore. We get lumped into traditional NYHC...

MRR: We can talk about that off the record later.

Joey: *[laughter]* We're very clearly aligned in the legacy of New York punk with the Latino scene here. Playing with bands at the Lake and Swamp, bands like (A)Truth, Skarroñeros, Lakras, Demencia Alkoholika, or bands that are not around anymore like Ke Chu Cha...That's where we have gotten all of our friends and family and community here in New York. I feel like we're carving out the reality that it doesn't matter your background as much as your content.

I should say also, our incredible drummer Soren is not here, but he has built and is a big part of an incredibly politically conscious football supporters' club here in NYC called the East River Pirates, who are all rabid supporters of the St. Pauli football team from Hamburg, Germany. They have also been incredible, and we are honored and lucky to be part of that community here.

Also working with great promoters like Scenic Presents or Rocks Off Booking, and I also do an event here in NYC with a very diverse section of other punks called Punk Island. And through working with all these bands and promoters I have grown very close to other scenes that I had not really had a ton of contact with before. Scenes like Brooklyn TransCore, where great bands like Trashy are involved, or Hoosatron Presents which does a great job empowering women in our scene to be in control. I love our scene, despite some issues, we have so many good people making so much great music. I feel very honored to be a part of it and build it alongside these wonderful folks.

MRR: Right.

Joey: And that's confrontational to a lot of people, too, on both sides of it. We're not tolerant of the idea that just because you're from New York, you've got to be playing traditional New York hardcore. You know, we're trying to be representative of a different worldview, and that doesn't fit super-well in that scene.

MRR: Depends.

Cello: Where I can probably touch upon and add to it is just the history of punk in New York since I grew up here and been going to punk shows, been going to CBGB's, Coney Island High, punk rock as a form of music is unlike any other form of music. It has a culture behind it. It has a message behind it. And a lot of these bands that we either play with today or are just playing in general, the shows we attend, it's fine if—like Joey said—if you're going to have fun and you're going to go up there and sing about I don't know, your fucking day at work, and jogging, not liking the New York City subway—

Joey: I would love to hear a fucking punk band sing about jogging. I think that would be hilarious.

Cello: But you know, us as a band, I think we have a lot more to say than just how much the New York City subway sucks how sad I am because of my fucking dog or girlfriend or some other bullshit. And I think punk rock in general has aspects of what we talk about, but in New York City, it seems few and far between. And I think currently, there really aren't too many bands that have a political message.

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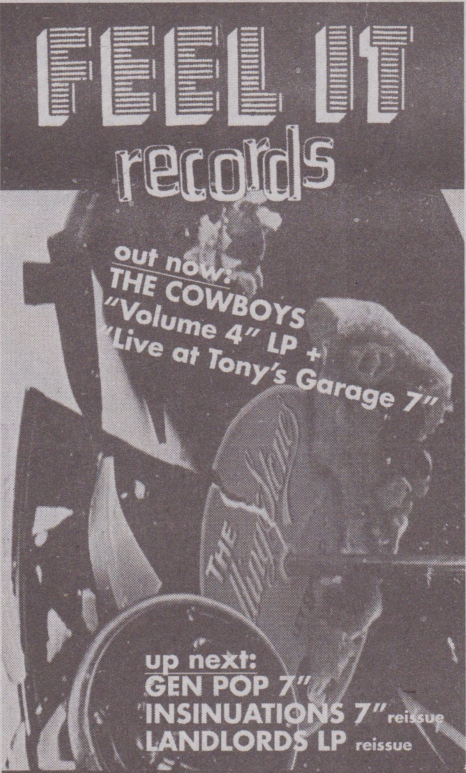

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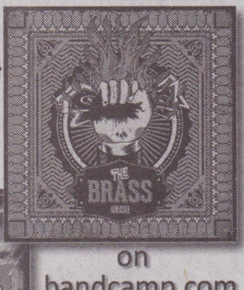
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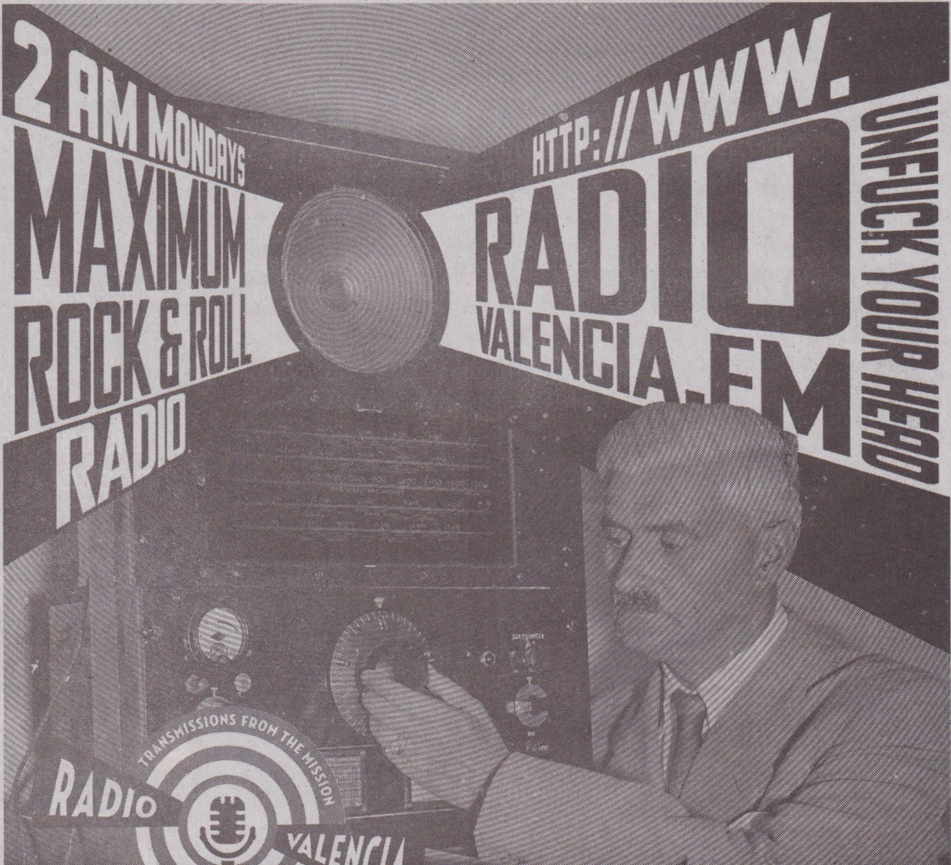

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DARK/LIGHT

INTERVIEW BY ERIN YANKE.

PHOTOS BY DARREN PLANK

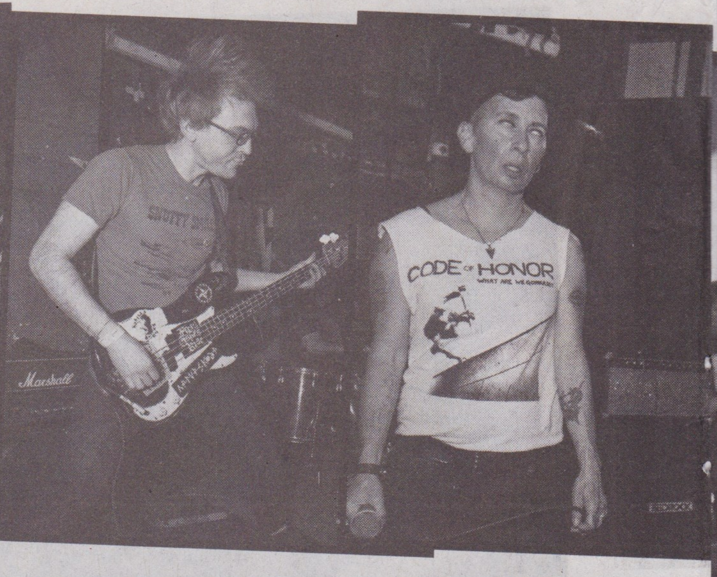
Dark/Light provide the soundtrack for my middle aging with cathartic danceable punk that obliterates the need for subgenre adjectives. I can hear other bands that I love in their sound, but I can also hear my friends and our times in the music and words. They have lyrical solidarity with my experiences of growing older in a country that wants us erased or dead, that kills our friends on the regular, in a town that's more and more about passive shopping consumer showoff style and destroying the conditions that made our creative mutant culture thrive. That also doesn't discount the beauty and love and real strength of our survival and our friends and our mutant perspectives and our far-from-boring lives. They are a true Portland treasure.

So, here's Dark/Light. Candy is the singer. Justin plays guitar and also sings. Colin plays bass and I've noticed sings occasionally. Mary plays drums. Get to know and love them the way that I do.

MRR: What is the general history of how you all got here to being in Dark/Light?
Candy: The Justin and Candy history, what was our first one, Candy and the Hot Dice? In your parents' living room?
Justin: Yeah, late '90s.
Candy: Bellingham, Washington. Schramer living room. Then the Problems together and then into the Triggers.
Justin: Early 2000 to 2005. Portland, Oregon.
Candy: And then Triggers were breakin' up and we met Mary at the Twilight.
Mary: I thought I met you guys at Aaron Romo's backyard.
Candy: You were like "Hey if you need a drummer, I would love to drum for your band." Then Sleepwalkers, RIP, for two or three years? Mary, Fernando, Justin and Candy. Then we broke up. Everyone went their separate ways. But in all of that time, we had all known and loved Colin.
Colin: We're old pals since the Triggers days. We went to a lot of the same concerts, performed together, I've been playing in bands since back then.

MRR: Band such as...
Colin: The first band we would have played with together was the Speds. The Observers, we played together a bunch of times for sure. And then maybe Warriors Of Genghis Khan?
Justin: Plan R. Clorox Girls.
Colin: I was a big fan. Never thought it would be me playing with these street legends.
Candy: Also Triggers used to play with Mary's old band, Del Toros.
Mary: Yup, with Colin's old bands too. There's mass flyers in [Colin's] bedroom of our bands playing together.
Colin: We were all playing at Satyricon. We were all playing at EJ's sometimes and Solid State sometimes.
Justin: We are all veterans of the Portland punk rock community. [*laughter*]

MRR: When did this band start? Why start a band?
Justin: Dark/Light started in 2013. We started the band with Tarika Hanawalt on bass, who was the bass player for the Triggers. We had not been playing in bands period at that point. Or Mary, were you playing?
Mary: Yeah, I was playing.
Justin: What were you playing with at the time?
Mary: Chemicals. Before that, Salted City and then Coldbringer.
Justin: I was in Loose Values, but Tarika wasn't playing, Candy wasn't playing, and we decided we wanted to play together. It was very natural. As far as why starting a band is a necessity for me personally? Just to unleash everything that's inside you and



a natural need and desire to play music and just express yourself and [*silly voice*] the rage that you feel from living in this fucked up society.

Candy: I started playing again after a three- or four-year hiatus because of tinnitus and going back to school. I had done all those things and I was like, "I need to play some music." But my tinnitus was so bad that I just couldn't play in bands. I needed a break.

MRR: Did that get lessened?

Candy: It went a little bit down, and now it's just back to what it was. Insanity level. But it's OK.

Justin: You kinda just deal with it.

Colin: I've never used earplugs and I feel like one day I'm gonna be this deaf guy with all these records.

Candy: You will be. I promise you. It really is a good thing to plug your fuckin' ears.

Mary: I play without ear plugs, but I always have ear plugs at shows when I'm watching a band. But I play without ear plugs.

MRR: How's your hearing?

Mary: It's all right.

Candy: Apparently tinnitus also can be genetic.

Justin: I usually bring earplugs to shows but only use 'em when there's shitty bands playing. 'Cause I am not gonna ruin my ears for some shitty band.

Candy: Yeah, that's the *wooorst*. You don't wanna waste your eardrums on shit music.

MRR: How long does it take you decide when you're watching a shitty band? One song?

Candy: Yeah, the first song. If there's something about it that you don't like—earplugs. I feel like there have been a few bands that we haven't worn earplugs for where we're like "oh yeah!" X or something like that, you need the whole experience.

MRR: What are your top three non-earplug bands?

Candy: X, Pere Ubu, and...Dead Moon.

MRR: So, you've all been in bands for years. How has being in a band changed in the time you've been in bands, and how is being in Dark/Light different from your other bands?

Colin: The first one, how has being in a band changed since back before? A million ways, a lot of which is my perception. When I was first playing in bands, I didn't really have any idea what was going on, so I was like "oh, it's really important to get the name out there and promote yourself," which now I'm like "nah, it's just have fun and people will either like it or they don't." I feel like maybe it was important to get a big band on every show, and some of those big bands were horrible—that show would have been better with just good bands. I used to go to a lot of shows where it was less DIY-based. That's where I came from originally, more street punk-type bands—this was late '90s, early 2000s. Then I found the DIY scene and everything changed for me somewhat overnight. I started realizing it was more about making a positive impact on the world, and that's something I really connected with.

Mary: I tend to feel like the oldest one at a show. Like at house shows too, now that we're older. Sometimes you watch the bands and take off, and before you would hang out and get wasted.

Justin: The reason for playing is not different than it was when I first started playing music, as far as how I feel and what it does for me, and the drive is the same. As far as Dark/Light being different from other bands, I am playing a different instrument than the instrument I grew up playing, which is drums. I taught myself how to play guitar, and at this point I'm getting better at expressing myself on that instrument. It's more rewarding in that fashion. As far as the music scene and what it's like when I go to shows, yeah, I think a lot of is different because we're all older and seeing a different perspective. A flip side to that, I do see a lot of similarities from when I was getting into punk rock, first going to shows and playing in basements and weird *ad hoc* shows and weird places, there's a lot of similarities with kids nowadays. But the things that people are going through, it's a different world.

Candy: The way Dark/Light has been different from my other bands is this is the band I've learned to play the majority of my shows sober. Most of the other bands I'd be knocking my head on concrete blocks, hurting myself. Maybe it's just coming with age but it's been the one that I can wrap my head around getting sober and actually doing it and enjoying it. It's been pretty rad. Also a cool thing about being in Dark/Light is there's lots of really cool bands to play with nowadays. Things have changed.

MRR: Who are those bands?

Candy: Currently there's so many local female-fronted bands... Macho Boys are pretty rad and Mr. Wrong, Creature to Creature—Mary's other band. There's tons.

MRR: Justin, we were at a show and you were talking about how it's the new kids' time...

Justin: Yeah, when I was getting into punk rock I didn't have too many friends that were in bands that were 40. Those people were not inviting us to play. There was a separation. It was kind of us against the world, and there was no help a lot of times from older punks or older rockers. They had their thing going on, and we were just trying to barely scrape together a show. [Now] there's younger people that are playing interesting cool music that are also playing on the same stage as people like us

that are still in it and are not going away. I think it's important for people our age to be able to be like "look, this is your time and space to perform and have your scene. I'm just happy to be here." I think that is important, to be able to coexist and help each other and have people that can be there to guide but not to give unwarranted advice. It's their time.

Candy: There's so many other bands. But also I think it's anybody's time to shine. It's cool that everything's being more female-fronted, but that's been slowly happening for years. There have been artists that have been making that possible for the next in line and the next in line and the next in line. There just becomes a point where there's enough bullshit in the world, you can't deny yourself the energy you feel, and right now it's exponentially insane, people need a way to express themselves. I don't totally blame Trump. I think it's been coming for a long time, he just gave everyone a bit of a push. It's been coming.

Mary: Way Worse, Gut Knife, Lost Nerves. Those are rad bands.

MRR: Talk more about the Portland punk scene.

Colin: When I was younger I really liked the Portland punk scene. When I started traveling more as I got older…No one ever told me that Portland was a, if not *the*, hub of DIY punk rock. The places I'd go, people would be really familiar with the bands from Portland, but I would be "oh, I don't know the bands from your town. But can't wait to check 'em out." So Portland is a very special place and it continues to be to this day. I think there are things about Portland that we all detest in our deepest hearts of hearts—gentrification, hipsters, and indie rock and all. We see it changing, and it's troubling and at times you can lose focus on how great it is. A lot of my friends have moved away in the last few years, but it's still my favorite place I've ever been and it's still got an amazing scene. I don't know all the great bands in this town and I'm trying so hard to find out, and sometimes there's some issues with the scene, and sometimes we don't have enough places to play but I love it. I love Lebenden Toten, Bellicose Minds, Public Eye, Vog.

Justin: There's a lot going on right now.

Mary: I feel like there always has been. I love it. I mean, I moved here from eastern Washington because the music scene was so rad.

MRR: Who writes lyrics? What moves you to write lyrics?

Candy: Justin writes a lot of lyrics in Dark/Light, I've been a lazy bum. [*laughter*] But he conveys a lot of what I talk to him about and takes that and turns it into lyrics.

Justin: Yeah, we have a good symbiotic relationship when it comes to lyric writing. It's important to me that a song gets the idea across, but at the same time you're able to read into it as a listener your own take on whatever that is. To me, the best songs are like that. You don't exactly know what the person who wrote it was thinking but you know what it means to you.

Candy: I'll tweak stuff too, I make it my own. But a lot of what he writes is based on dreams that I've had or experiences. It's almost like he's my interpreter. After Sleepwalkers I had horrible writer's block for years. I'm coming out of it, but it's weird.

MRR: Is there a song you can think of you can walk us through how it developed?

Justin: The song "In Our Dreams" on our LP on Dirt Cult Records. Candy woke up one day and started explaining her dream to me. The way she was explaining it pretty much ended up being word for word the song. It was just amazing.

Candy: Our friend Damian who passed away, used to be a roadie for the Triggers. He came to me in a dream, and told me he was worried about Jonny, about two years ago. He somehow sent me messages saying I'm worried about Jonny, somebody needs to check on Jonny, and I conveyed it to Jonny. He doesn't remember it, but eventually we all found out that he had cancer.

Justin: So Candy wakes up after having that dream and says Damian, rest in peace, came to me. Candy says "I feel like he knew that we're fucked up all the time in the day and night but we pay attention in our dreams. He knows that we'll be able to pay attention, get the warning for our friend." That was pretty heavy. The lyrics kinda wrote themselves. A lot of times the lyrics just write themselves. We deal with things that everyone deals with like stress and anxiety and everyday bullshit you deal with in your life because of the crazy world we live in, but also the positive. Things happen in every day and out of our conversations, it's like "Oh, that's it. Bam."

MRR: I feel like we should mention that you're married.

Justin: That's true. There's context involved. We spend a lot of time together. Also to me it seems like a lot of punk rock bands have this thing where you're either writing about political issues or personal stuff. To me, it's all political. In this day and age. Your choice to talk about something, anything, it's going to be political nowadays. Your choice not to talk about something is political or trying to stay away from a subject is political. We have political views, sure. But that's not how our songwriting works. The political stuff is there because we live in the world we live in. Part of the context of our lives.

MRR: What's your favorite song to play?

Colin: Mine is "Get Out Of The City." I've liked it since I was just a fan of their band before I joined. It's really fun to play.

MRR: Why?

Colin: It's definitely musical for me, I really enjoy the lyrics but there's something specific about the bassline that I really

gravitated to. It's a bonus of joining a band you're a big fan of, you get to play those parts you always really liked.
Mary: What's that new one?
Candy: "We Conjure Ghosts"?
Mary: Yeah. It's kind of hardcore-y. I don't play hardcore anymore but it's fun to play that fast.
Candy: "Kill Some Time' is my favorite. I just like the vocal ups and downs. And sharing them with Justin and what Mary's doing and Colin's doing. It's fun for me.
Justin: My favorite song to play is "Tigers" because that song I wrote when I had shingles. It's about being really stressed out. I hated having shingles.
Mary: Do you have flashbacks?
Justin: The right side of my face is still damaged from nerves from my shingles so it's still kinda there. I thought only super old people had shingles. But more and more young people are getting it—possibly because of flu vaccine and its effect on people's immune system. If you had chicken pox, it's the same thing. So, if you have chicken pox, you have shingles and the ability to get shingles another time.
Candy: It's a different bumpy nerve damage.
Justin: So "Seeing Tigers" is based on back when we were cave people. You'd see a tiger and you'd have this response of fight or flight and super stress and anxiety. As human beings we're still programmed to that same response. But your body can't tell if it's just some crappy drama at work or in the news or a tiger in your living room. It's the same thing: "*aaahh!!*" So me and my friend would always be super stressed out at work and we'd see each other and say "How ya doing?" "Not too good, seeing tigers." That's where that came from, about losing your mind.
Candy: Shout out to ribs.

MRR: Do you have a band philosophy that drives your decision-making process? How do you decide to do what you do?
Candy: That'd be individual to each person.
Justin: We're a pretty anarcho collective.
Mary: We take a vote, about each thing, what shows.
Colin: I feel like we don't have a band philosophy as such, but we all try to be decent human beings, so if someone was like "this is a sweet show but that dude's a rapist," we would all decide not to do it. There are many band philosophies we all share. We agree on most things along the what a band should do ethically. But not one thing in particular more than another.
Justin: We're into communicating.
Candy: Don't sell out.
Mary: What's your definition of selling out, though?
Candy: I think with every month it changes and you have to adjust to what's going on. But basically don't be a dick, don't play crappy shows.
Colin: I'm down to play crappy shows.
Candy: Don't play shitty shows. Play good shows.
Mary: I don't know what being a sellout is, but if our song was playing at a Blazers game I'd be stoked.
Candy: I don't think that would be sellout status. That's local and we're local, so it's all good.
Justin: If the Portland Trail Blazers win a championship within the next 2 years, whatever they want us to do, we'll do it. We'll put a record out just for them.
Colin: I don't like sports. Y'all are down and that's fine. Be yourself.

MRR: Future plans?
Colin: We have a four-song 7" coming out on Dirt Cult Records that we're all really excited about.

MRR: Colin, how is it to join a band after it's already started? Have you done this before? Especially when you're a fan.
Colin: I did it once before, with Clorox Girls who I was also a fan of, similar with Dark/Light. It's awesome. Everyone has been really welcoming, which is pretty crucial. I felt apprehensive at first adding my own fingerprint on these songs. Everyone has been open that "Hey, if I really hate what you're doing I'll tell you, but chances are I won't, and you should do whatever you want to do." There's been a lot of positive feedback.
Justin: [*whispers*] We recorded over your parts.
Colin: *Uh oh*. But it's been awesome.

MRR: So you have this record coming out. Is that gonna come out in time for your west coast tour?
Colin: We're doing a nine-day west coast tour in June. We're hoping to have that in time. If not, we did release an LP last year. We've all toured a lot on the west coast with our other bands, so it'll be fun to do this together.

MRR: What is the best possible world for Dark/Light in 2018?
Candy: No Trump.
Colin: Someone assassinates him and Pence and Paul Ryan all at once. One bullet, three heads. That would make our lives better.
Mary: A tour van.
Candy: New songs. We gotta get some new songs.
Mary: Play with some more cool bands.
Colin: We were a little bit stagnating. We wanna have new songs but we don't, or we want to tour but we haven't, and I think 2018 is the year we're starting to accomplish a lot of those goals. In that way this is already turning into the 2018 that's ideal for Dark/Light. We're doing things. We have other out of town dates in March and we haven't played out of town at all since I've joined. I've been in the band a year and a half at this point. We've all been chomping at the bit in one way or another.
Justin: It's a bleak era we're living in. I'm kind of a live-for-now person, so it's hard for me to think of a possible future. I try to live for right now. There's a fuckload of shit that I have no control over.
Mary: I just wanna vacation and play music.

MRR: Is there anything else you wanted to say?
Candy: I'd like to say thank you to Dead Moon. Fred, sorry to see you go. Andrew, we miss you. Toody, please hang in there.
Justin: I'd like to second that.
Colin: I might just say thanks to Erin for interviewing us. And thanks to *Maximum*!
Mary and Candy: Thanks Erin!
Justin: Portland punk RULES!

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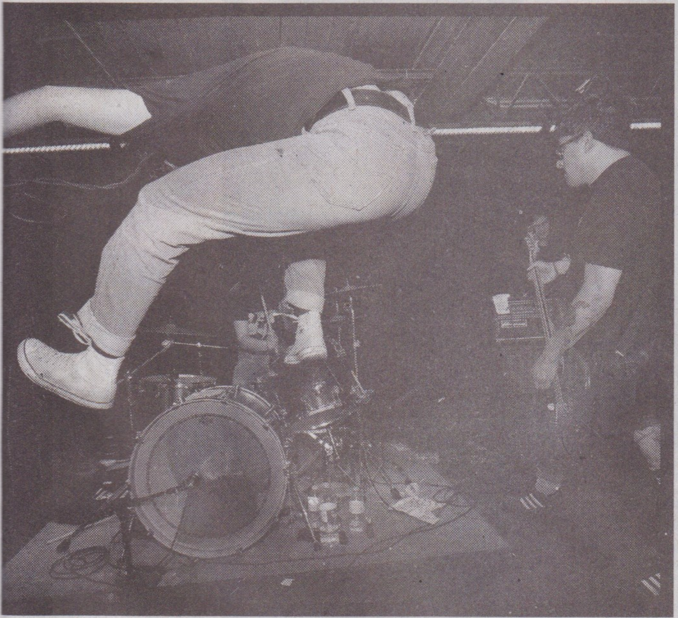

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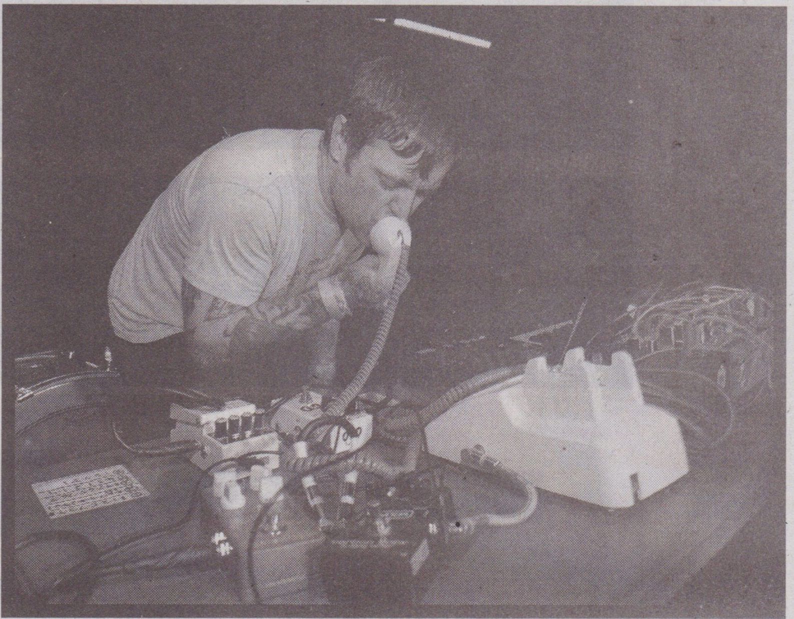


YC/CY

Last summer, Switzerland's YC-CY released their second LP, Todestanz, on X-Mist Records. They also toured Europe and the East Coast of the United States. After touring the East Coast together, Frank from the band Ten Volt Shock interviewed YC-CY, chatting about some things he never got to ask on tour.

Interview by Frank Otto.

Photographs by Tilman Dominka and Fabian Reichenbach.

MRR: I want to ask about your live performances. It seems like you are facing each other most of the time, and there is no interaction with the crowd. You also hardly move around at all. Is there a greater concept behind your performance?
There is no concept behind it. We know we probably are not the most exciting band to watch perform in a visual way, but it is who we are and how we feel playing in front of a bunch of strangers. It's somehow still a little awkward for us to play live, but the music we play just doesn't make us feel like jumping or running around on stage. It feels kind of tense to us and most of the time I personally can't even look at anyone in the crowd, so I just stare at our drummer.

MRR: Do you feel embarrassed for other bands when they jump all over the place or have some other kind of stage performance? Do you think you will change yours in the future?
The performance aspect of bands can be really interesting and make or break a band's set for me. I'm not embarrassed for other bands jumping around or whatever else they do. Sometimes you can just tell it's an awkward act and it doesn't fit at all with the characters of the band. Bands feel like they have to put on some kind of show that people expect, when all they need to do is act how they feel. We just happen to feel like standing still and stare at each other, maybe dance a little from time to time. We don't really talk too much about our performance and we definitely are not planning on changing it in the future. But who knows, you know. Over time our music will change, so there is always a possibility of us changing our performance.

MRR: How do you see your band changing in the future, then? Where do you see the band twenty years from now?
That's a tough one. I don't think we are going to be a band anymore twenty years from now. I just can't picture it being like that. We are all friends, so it would be nice to still be talking to each other from time to time.

MRR: So no YC-CY twenty years from now, but where do you see yourself as a musician or as a person?
I can't even imagine being that old. I know it's not that old, but twenty years from now I will be 50. I never think that far ahead. When I was 15, I couldn't imagine what it would be like to be 30, and here I am, 30 years old. It also all depends so much on your surroundings and the place you are in so I really can't say. If I'm still alive twenty years from now, I hope I will live somewhere nice and not too crowded.

MRR: I know you are friends outside of your band. Would you say there is a consensus within you guys in taste of music, fashion, and art?
Yeah, to a certain extent. We all listen to a lot of different music, and there are so many genres, and I guess out of every genre, there are a couple things we all like. But we don't spend that much time together so I'm not always up to date with everyone's current taste in music. The only time the four of us are together is when we write new songs or play shows. And the only time when we listen to music together is probably when we drive to a show; then someone just puts on music...We will definitely show each other music we currently like, different stuff, but I couldn't tell you what the other guys' favorite bands are—it's constantly changing. But it's always easy playing music in the car. We all like a lot of different stuff. But there is definitely some kind of consensus, which is also resulting in the music we play. As far as fashion goes, I guess there is a consensus in the way we like to express our taste in fashion. We all have some kind of taste and like to wear clothes we think are nice. But none of us are super into fashion, and at the end of the day, we just wear comfortable clothes. We are definitely interested in some of

the same genres of art. Especially when it comes to film or movie stuff or performance art. I think it blends in with our band. We talk about movies and artwork while driving or let it influence our music in different ways. But then I also feel like outside of that, there's so much stuff in art that I care about that I couldn't even tell you about it all. A lot of it has nothing to do with what we do as musicians, so it's not present in our band and also too big of a genre to really dig in compared to the little amount of time we actually spend together.

MRR: What would you say were the reasons for starting this band?

Well, we all played in bands before, but with this band I had a vision and I really wanted to be the one coming up with the ideas for songs and the music in general. Before, it was always me writing the music with someone else and I played the drums. As a drummer, there is only so much you can do to influence the sound of a song. The guitar player has the riffs and kind of sets the vibe or mood for the song. I decided to buy a guitar and just kind of figure out what I like. Try something new. And I asked Gregor and Remo to join because I really like to be around them; they're really easy going and open minded to the more experimental side of music. I thought it would be fun to try something new with them, and I really like the way they play their instruments. I wanted to start this band to do something that I haven't done before and explore new fields or experiment more than before. I really felt like just capturing a mood and feelings, without really having bands as an inspiration too much. When we started this band, there was no band that we were like "oh, we wanna sound like that band or copy them." The goal was to really just do something that we thought was original and reflects on certain feelings inside us.

MRR: Alright, let's talk about the style of music you play. First question that comes to mind is: How did you come up with your sound? It's a weird mix of noise rock, hardcore, and other genres, but also feels fresh and never heard before.

Most of the ideas just come from me walking from place A to B. When I walk around, there are so many things I see and hear, or even smell. Sometimes it's really overwhelming; there are so many things going on and you almost have to decide which things you wanna focus on. Every person has an own way of capturing or taking in those things, but everything always makes you feel a certain way. It can be really inspirational just going for a short walk. But it can also be damaging and scary. As cliché as it sounds, we live in such a crazy and scary time and growing up in such a success- and popularity-oriented place, it can suck life out of everything and make you feel numb to a lot of things. I think it's funny sometimes in the reviews for our records when people name bands that we sound like. A lot of the bands mentioned I don't like and don't think we sound like them at all. There are so many bands out there, more than you will ever know. But there will never be another band that reflects on the same personal feelings of us as individuals in the same way, with rhythms, melodies, lyrics, and other aesthetics. So how could this band sound anything but original? It's just the fact that it's us playing the music, being really honest and open while doing it.

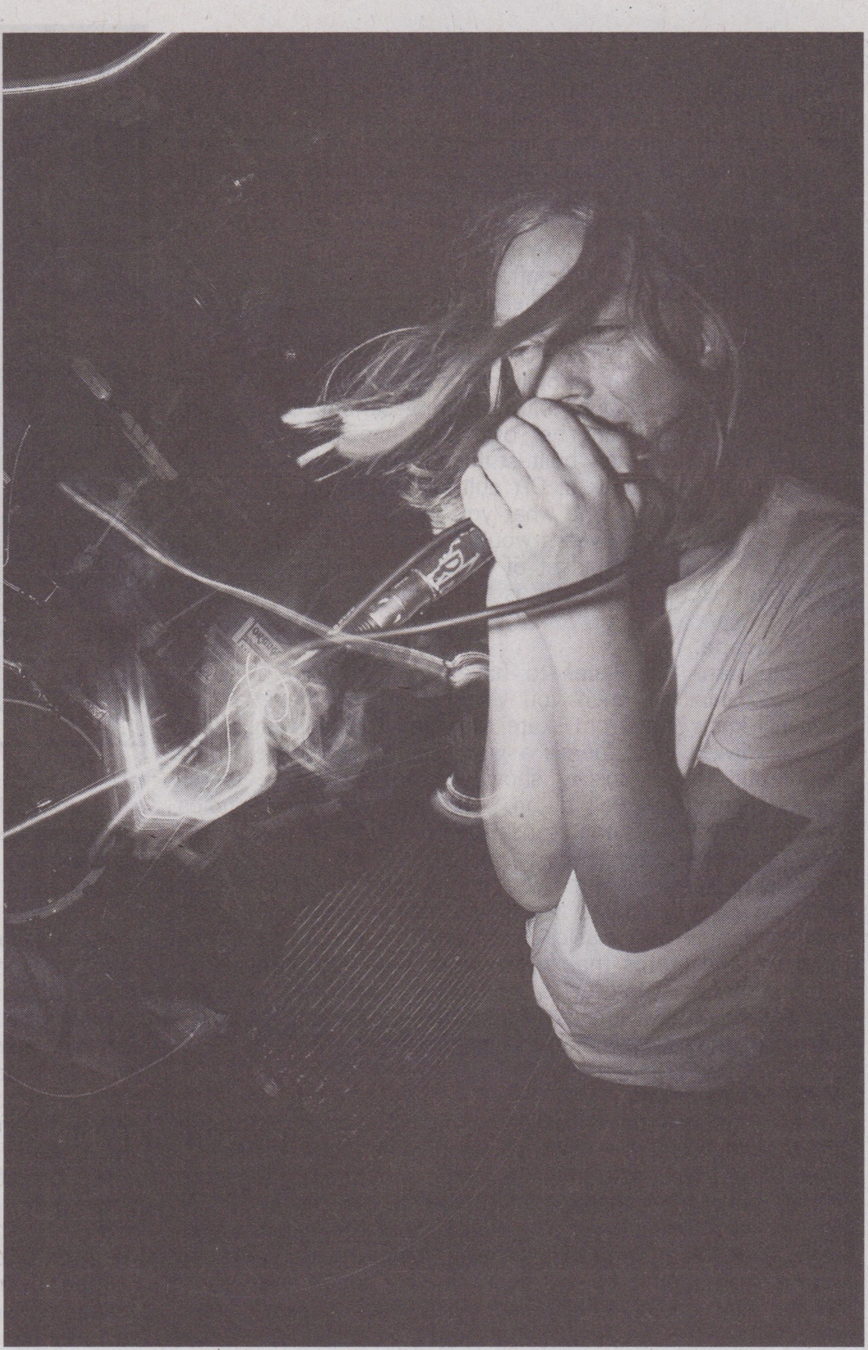
MRR: Seems like the ideas are coming from a rather dark place. Do you sleep well at night, or do you wake up in the mornings all sweaty and tons of new ideas on your mind?

I sleep really well at night; I'm a deep sleeper. Sometimes it takes me a long time to fall asleep because my mind is still

going, but once I fall asleep, I'm out. Waking up in the morning, I feel pretty relaxed most of the time and don't think about music at all.

MRR: So I know you got some love for more obscure instruments, some of which are built by yourself. Can you tell us a bit more about that?
Well, there is the regular setup we use for our band. It consists of a guitar and a bass, both with some pedals, a drum set, our singer's voice, and sometimes to write some songs we have used synthesizers and drum machines. Other than that, I have a water phone, a theremin and some other little things like that. What I like the most is my little contact microphone that you can tape onto anything and make it into an instrument. That's actually the funnest thing to do. For example, tape it on to a soccer ball and run it through some effect pedals and bounce the ball. It's crazy! Me and a friend of mine have built lots of different instruments using that method. We recorded a record playing some self-built things like that, along with some real instruments. I have a lot of free time, so a lot of times I just experiment with materials and pretty much anything I can think of and try to make things sound and capture it with the microphone.

MRR: Let's talk about the tour we did together with YC-CY and Ten Volt Shock. We got to know each other quite well, and it was an intense time traveling together. What did you take away from touring with a band with members that are almost your parents' age?
What I really took away from it is that you guys have been doing your band for almost twenty years and have fun with it. I think that's really cool because our band is still pretty new, and a lot of times I already feel over it. But I guess I'm just really dramatic about the things that I do. I feel like I do them really intensely and it can get too much and exhausting. Sometimes my amp or some pedal doesn't work the way I think it should and I get bent out of shape pretty fast. I probably shouldn't worry so much. Other than that, it was just like any other tour. It was in a different place, but like every other tour, it's nice to meet all those people everywhere that find joy in helping out small bands. Like making us food or letting us crash at their places. It's interesting talking to people from all over the place. I feel like after every tour, that's what I really take away from it: there are so many nice people everywhere. For one night, they are your best friends, and the next day you move on and probably won't see them ever again.



MRR: You guys live pretty far apart from each other. How do you make it work as a band and what can we expect from you guys in 2018?
As far as living far apart, it's no problem. I collect and record ideas over a period of time, and once I have a bunch of things ready, we meet up somewhere and try out ideas and write songs. That way, it keeps it fresh and interesting since we don't practice on a regular basis. We just meet up for a week in a nice place and rent a house or something. We actually just did that again last week. Rented a house in the woods and wrote songs for our third album.

So for 2018, we are working on a new record and hopefully will record it this year too. There are also some other music projects that we are involved with and some of those will probably come out in some shape or form in 2018. Other than that just keep it moving and play some shows. We are doing a Euro tour in April and then go from there. If anyone wants to help us book some shows on the West Coast, or anywhere for that matter, feel free to contact us about it!

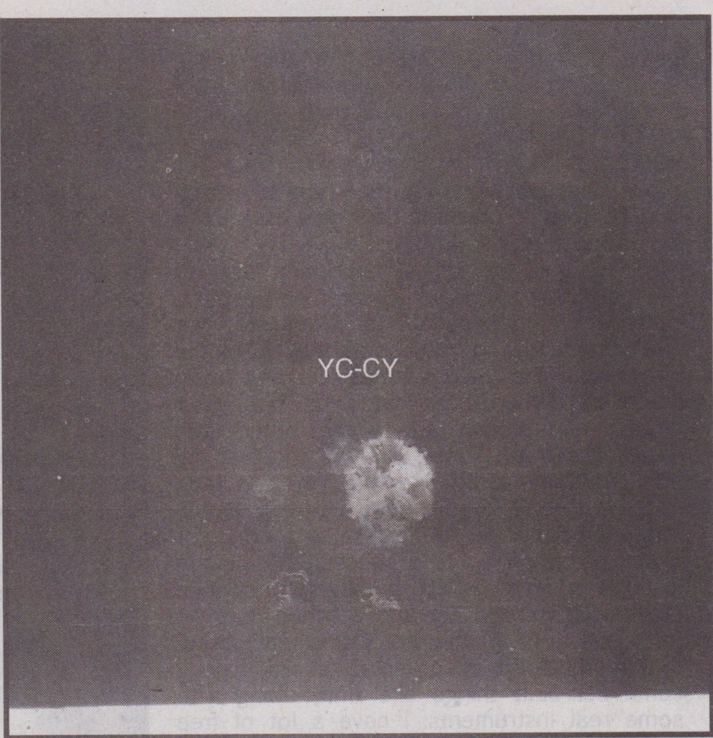
MRR: I would like to end it with a word game. I'm just gonna give you some words and you tell me what comes to mind. Punk.
I feel like growing up, it probably saved me from a lot of bullshit. Through punk I got into skating, met a lot of people and all that, and that kept me busy. I didn't waste too much time on stupid school parties and stuff like that

because I spent my free time playing music, skating, or doing shows for other bands. Looking back, I think it's good that I did it that way. When you're younger, it's so easy to get caught up in stupid things and waste away. For me it was definitely a positive influence at an early stage, just learning that you can set up little shows anywhere and start your own band and stuff like that. When you get older, you get more involved in more normal life stuff, but because you've lived through punk-influenced stuff and were part of a DIY culture at a young age, it can teach you so much. It definitely made my life easier, even now. If you wanna do something, you can just do it—in all types of aspects of life. Me and my friends built our own skate ramps or set up shows for local punk bands during school. Growing up, I saw my mom printing her own art magazine, my brother played music, my dad built stuff around the house. That's pretty much what punk or DIY culture now means to me. Do your individual thing and what you think is cool. Don't be a copycat. My teenage years would have been boring without all that. The whole mindset of it is what I think about when I hear the word. The music is secondary to me.

MRR: Scene.
It's important for places to have some kind of a scene, and you can tell when you visit places that have a cool scene. I know that from skate trips and touring with bands. Where I live, I think there's a good scene. There are always people up for organizing shows, playing in bands, there's an independent radio station, zines and recording studios, record stores. So in that sense, there's a strong scene here. There's always some place to hang out if you want to. That definitely helps a lot when you're in a band. There is a place you can record, venues where you can play shows, a radio station to play your music, zines that write about local music and art, and stores that sell your records. Everyone knows each other, so it can feel a little bland sometimes, but that's just the small town effect. A lot of bands have come through here and they always like it a lot, it seems.

MRR: Mainstream.
I mean, mainstream is really the opposite of underground, right? And I feel like with social media, the internet and everything, there isn't really that much underground anymore. I don't really think there is a *mainstream* mainstream either. I'm not sure. I don't pay attention to that too much. I don't have a problem with things being mainstream. Everything seems mainstream to me because you see it everywhere all the time. Even a band like ours, which is really small, we could have an Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, all that stuff, and everyday people can look at it and we can feed them whatever and play the famous band life. There's no real border anymore to what is and isn't mainstream. Everything is just so accessible and out there that it's hard for me to draw a line between the so-called underground and mainstream. Is our band underground if we are using a platform like Facebook? Is skateboarding mainstream because it's on TV and Justin Bieber is doing it? I don't really care. I just do the things I do because I like doing them, and everybody else should probably do so too.

MRR: Society.
What comes to mind is that so many places are still dealing with corrupt leaders and are dealing with living conditions or situations more brutal and unfair than I could ever think of. It seems like a lot of people are not willing to learn from the past or just ignore it for financial gain, and that's a really frustrating scenario. There are so many different factors that play into a society and how the system works. It seems so complex, and I don't think any of the current systems that any society is going with seem to really be working. To make something like that work, though, everyone involved would have to take active part, which doesn't seem realistic. Like I said earlier, it's a scary time we are living in, looking at all the different things going on in the world.



MRR: Alternative movements.
Alternative movements are really interesting to me. The whole DIY culture and its mindset...It's what makes bands like ours be able to go on tour and play show in so many different places. We are all involved in doing shows where we live, and we've had so many shows here but also played so many shows all over the place. If it wasn't for alternative groups, people that believe in those movements, we probably wouldn't do this interview, right? I think it's great, and it creates a platform for small bands like ours. You know, if there are ten people who really like our band in Prague or anywhere in the world. Does that mean we shouldn't play there because it's only for ten people, or does it mean we should play a small show there for exactly those then people? The punk and DIY movement successfully makes that possible and has been making it possible for a longer time that I have been alive for. People outside of that bubble, like people at my work, they don't even know that that's a thing, that you can just go on tour like that. They think that when my band goes to Florida or some place that we play a stadium. I'm glad I get to be a part of it and I think there will always be a place and a need for movements like that.

MRR: Any last words?
Thanks *MRR* for reaching out to us, giving us the platform for an interview. Thanks for Frank for doing the interview with me. And thanks to the people checking out this interview or our band in general.

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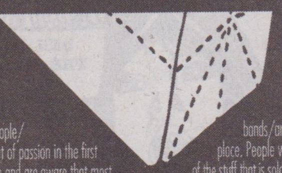

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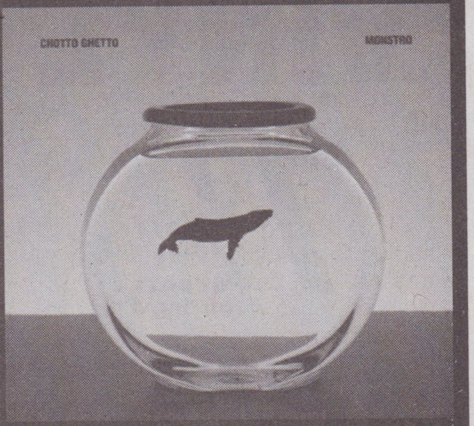

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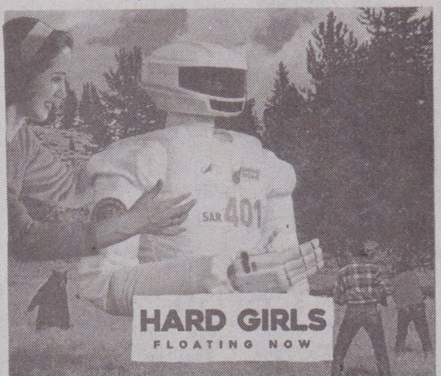

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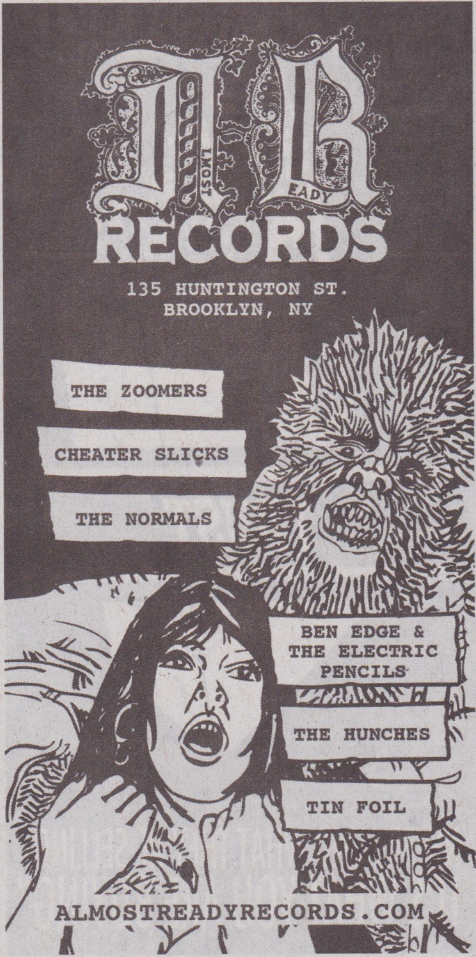
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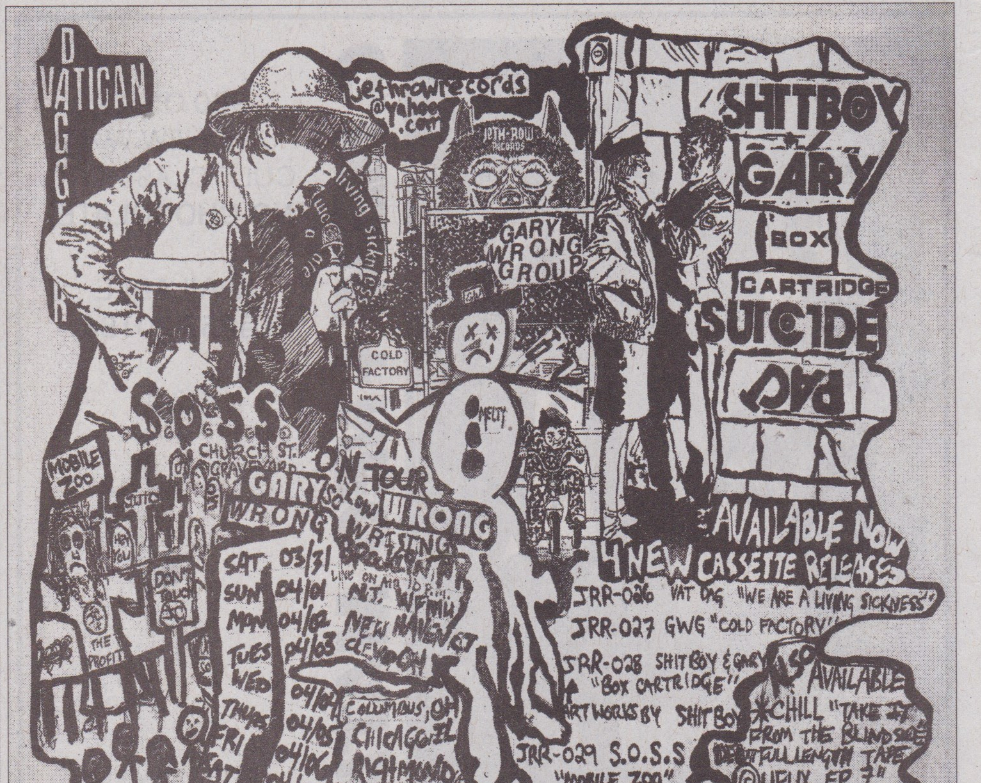
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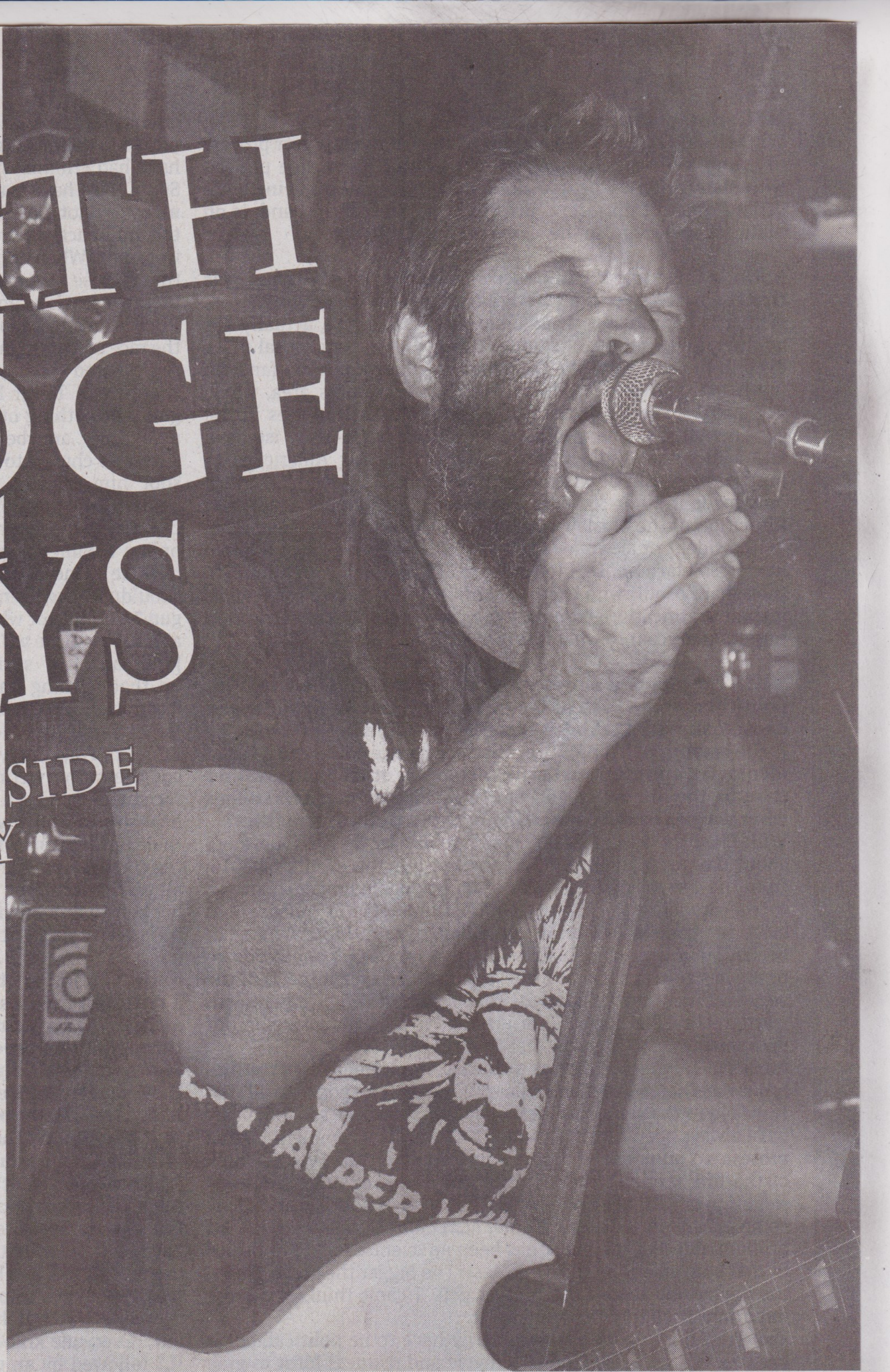

INTRODUCTION AND INTERVIEW BY MIKE ENGLISH.

PHOTOS BY DARREN PLANK.

It is unfortunate for humanity that moments like the present tend to be low points in the course of human progress, but sometimes there's a bit of hope lurking behind all the bullshit. A band comes along to remind us that, even in the direst of times, there are people out there concerned about our future and willing to use punk as a vehicle to provoke conversation and change. Enter the Death Ridge Boys: Will Harris, Paul Burdette, Jonathan Hughes, and Erik Trexel. They are longstanding members of the D.I.Y. community, and their latest project has produced a set of righteous jams that will keep you motivated to smash the system. Their debut LP, The Right Side of History, *will be released this spring on Rawhead Records and is currently available on cassette through WHMH Records.*

MRR: How did the band get started?
Will Harris: The band is the result of an over twenty-year process of trying to do an Oi! / garage rock / "trad" punk side project, with many different people along the way, but never being quite serious about it until now. Pressing On, our "other" band, is on hiatus of some sort, so this came to fruition, finally.

MRR: Is there any significance behind the band's name, or is this the first salvo in a war against the Oak Ridge Boys?
Will: The band name, while admittedly a bad pun, actually has another, quite serious meaning. Death Ridge is an actual place deep in the bowels of the Oregon Coast Range, not too far from my home. It overlooks the Drift Creek wilderness area, which was home to some of the last homestead communities in the continental US. The people who settled these tiny, isolated, and rain-soaked valleys were some of the last Americans to pursue the dream of a free life on free land. Unfortunately, they only made it 20 or 30 years before the climate, poor roads, and formation of the Siuslaw National Forest ended the community. As a resident of an area close to there, and living in an original homestead farmhouse, I felt a sense of kinship, through time, to those hardy souls who tried so hard, in an era before strip malls, instant gratification, corporate control, and political corruption turned America into what it is today.

MRR: The album is a pretty serious indictment of our current political fuckery. Each of the tracks hits right on the nose and doesn't shy from taking a position on a number of issues, be it the slaying of Tamir Rice, the resurgence of fascist / racist ideologies, and even our desire to colonize other planets rather than fix the one we've got. Could you speak in general about what you see as the connection between punk and politics?
Will: The band was originally meant to be a bit less serious, more about day to day personal experience, but the events of 2016, from the increasing exposures of questionable police shootings to the Standing Rock protest and ultimately the presidential election, made it very clear to me that certain things needed to be said, in a very immediate and direct way. Punk and hardcore to me has always been, at its best, a near perfect synthesis of the very best rock and roll music with a passionate engagement with truth, reality, and a desire for justice. We are attempting, in our own small way, to carry on that tradition.
Jonathan Hughes: The punk scene's commitment to DIY ethics has always helped it to stay true to the artist's response to all that is fucked in the world, politics and all. Historically, art and music have always been necessary outlets for political commentary and protest, so punk doesn't have a monopoly on that voice. Think of the folk scene in the '60s and Phil Ochs, or Billie Holiday's rendition of "Strange Fruit," or Public Enemy's political and social commentary on *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*. All brilliant shit. For me, punk has been an avenue to add my voice to that conversation, to that protest. The bigger the scene grows, the bigger and louder the protest gets. I can't think of a more important time to resist with music.
Erik Trexel: Punk doesn't necessarily have to be political, but it has to speak on some kind of struggle and realness for it to grab my attention. As long as life is a struggle for me, I think I will always relate to music that speaks from those depths, so that's maybe the essence of punk for me. Death Ridge Boys encompasses all the things I've always loved about punk.

MRR: "Tamir Rice" is a banger, and yet, it's probably the hardest song for me to listen to, given the senselessness of his tragic death. How and why did you decide to immortalize him?
Will: Since what, 2014 or 2012, Trayvon, or since forever…it seems there has been an increase in the awareness of shootings of African Americans by police under questionable circumstances. Definitely the ubiquity of cellphone cameras and social media has helped expose these incidents. Although the individual circumstances of each incident have been picked to death: some of these people may have had criminal records, many did not. Some may have participated in a crime, many did not. Some may have been under the influence of drugs or alcohol, many were not. What unifies these incidents is that the use of force was disproportionate to the occasion, and that use of deadly force seems to be entirely precipitated by the race of the victim. To me, none of these represented this injustice as much as the shooting of Tamir Rice. Literally a child, guilty of nothing other than playing with a toy gun…and being black in America. Given no chance to even react, the police shot him in less than two seconds. I made the mistake of reading some online comments in a story about him (reading online comments in this age is always a mistake). One of them said as such, "He shouldn't have been playing with that toy gun," as if he got what he deserved? What a sick, sick place we've come to.
Jonathan: Just saying his name brings up that burning hatred of injustice and frustration, but that is why we can never forget Tamir Rice like we can never forget Emmitt Till, Trayvon Martin, and the countless other victims of institutionalized, racist violence. As a high school teacher, I hear stories from my students of color and their interactions with cops and people in the community. They all have a story, they all are impacted by the fear that it could happen to any of them. The least we can do is acknowledge it in song, in protest.

rshall
rshall

MRR: Racism, or at least what feels like a critique of regressive Alt-Right / Nazi attitudes, is a pretty consistent theme throughout the record. "Don't Talk to Me" and "Not Going Back" sound like they come from direct encounters you've had. Are there personal backstories that accompany these songs?
Will: The public resurgence of racism, due in no small part to our "shithole" president's ascension, I find incredibly disturbing. If there is to be any hope at all of any kind of progress for humanity, this disease needs to be dealt with. As a native of Tennessee, I have seen the conditions that perpetuate these ideas, I have felt them in myself, and have rejected them. "Don't Talk to Me" is all true, based on a step brother of mine who, one Christmas while everyone was watching some History Channel show, blurted out, "Everyone knows we were on the wrong side in World War II," followed by an uncomfortable silence. Things got weirder later, when his brother's present to him was a copy of *Mein Kampf*. No joke. And keep in mind these were not rednecks, they were clean cut, collegiate, Toyota Corolla-driving people who watched *Seinfeld*…I never talked to them again.
Jonathan: It is frightening, to say the least, how quickly fascist attitudes and racism are rising to the surface of political power these days. For me, these songs really capture a lot of my emotional response to the rise of the fascism, racism, and hatred. "Don't Talk to Me" is Will's story, his experience, but I believe most of us have had a similar interaction, often with family, where someone reveals their true perspective and it is right there, in your face. Hopefully, people can use these songs

to help them deal with the frustrations that arise from their own personal experiences with this ilk.

Erik: The backlash against Black Lives Matter has brought up an ugliness in this country that has been quiet for some time, and I think we want to be clear on where we stand. It's amazing how many times people try to explain that *no one* is saying other lives don't matter or that black lives matter more, simply that in the current state of this country, statistically, in minority communities and in the judicial system, black lives don't matter, and it needs to be addressed. BLM is raising issue to the fact that African Americans are often targeted by law enforcement, disproportionately imprisoned, and unjustly killed in alarming numbers. It's a problem that the dominant culture has continuously ignored, and it's no longer possible to put a lid on it. There's no way I would be in an Oi! band that didn't have politics, so drawing a line on an issue like this seems like a good place to start.

MRR: "Get Out of the City" is a pretty straightforward message, but I have to say, viewing this from Kentucky, the last thing I want to do is trade what solidarity and community I do have for the country. Urban life has allowed many of us to thrive and escape the confines of rural and suburban environments. I'm wondering if you could share your vision for how things might be different if we took your words to heart.

Will: It is true there are many cultural benefits to living in an urban environment, punk music being one! There are also many downfalls…insane traffic, being subject to changes in the rental and housing market, vulnerability to shortages in food, fuel, and water. Look at the water crisis in Cape Town, South Africa, due to be the first large city in our era to literally run out of water! I reached a point personally many years ago where I wanted to try something different, and was greatly inspired by "Back to the Land" literature from the '70s. My wife and I were lucky enough to land, purely by chance, in an area settled by veterans of that same movement, so we found a sense of community immediately. It was amazing to find yourself in the middle of nowhere, at a party, surrounded by people your parents' age, smoking weed and saying, "Fuck George Bush!" Needless to say, we never left. While the West Coast is rife with such oases, the South and Midwest offer less potential, for sure. Having clean air and water, the ability to grow my own food, and just the lack of noise and insanity has made it more than worth it to me. Do I like going up the city, hitting a bar and seeing some bands? Sure, but when I get home…it's even better. Here's an equation to round it all out: add up what you and your partner or a couple of close friends have paid in rent or house payments in the last ten years in any major city, then look at the price of a piece of land…ouch. (Although, to be fair, wages are usually lower in rural areas.)

Jonathan: I get where you are coming from, Mike. I grew up in rural Vermont and couldn't move to the city fast enough for all the reasons you stated in your question. To connect with like-minded people, to be part of the punk community—it means a great deal to me. But getting older, I definitely have learned to appreciate my younger days in small town, rural Vermont. If I wanted to go to a punk show in my town, fuck it, I booked one. If we wanted to skate a half pipe, we built one. Again, it goes back to the theme of "do it yourself." I don't plan on moving to the coastal range anytime soon, so for me, I view the song through the metaphorical lens of my own rural experience and what it taught me.

Erik: I grew up in a small town in Wisconsin, and have lived in Portland for eighteen years, so I think I have a well contrasted opinion on rural vs. city life. Personally, I would love to live a few miles out of town, but I am also happy in my city neighborhood. What's most important to me is access to healthy food, music, community, work, and quality of life. I can't fathom living out as far Will does but completely respect it, admire it, and sometimes envy the life he and his family have created for themselves.

MRR: So, fuck Mars?

Will: Absolutely fuck Mars. I remember science fiction movies from the '50s where, when the Earth was faced with a threat, people and nations would work together to solve the problem—what a joke! That moment is facing us now, climate change *is real*, plastic waste in the oceans is coming back up the food chain to kill us, species are dying at an insane rate, and the response is either, denial, or…Colonize Mars! So, if we don't change our lifestyles, technology, and attitudes, Mars can go from a wasteland, to a habitable planet, then right back to a wasteland! If these technophiles would just knuckle down and figure out how to save the planet we already have…but the Trumps of the world want to pretend nothing's wrong. *Fuck!*

Jonathan: During the spring semester of last year, students in our physics courses were all studying the colonization of Mars, totally from the point of view of it being a clear sign of human progress. In an English language development support class of mine, I worked with students to scaffold this unit. Again, everything was from the paradigm of "colonizing Mars equals human progress." Previously, we did a unit looking at the Standing Rock protests, so it was an interesting shift. As we wrapped up the unit, a student raised the question, "Why don't we put all this money and science toward healing Earth versus going to Mars?" The timing was perfect, as we ended the unit by connecting what we had learned about the degradation of Earth at Standing Rock and the flippancy we have as a society toward space colonization, as if that's the answer. Of course, they needed to hear and analyze "Only One Planet"—any time you can get away with playing a punk song in class, you do it.

Erik: It seems pretty clear to me the wealthiest of this world are currently in a race to maximize profits and pillage this planet before bailing because they gave up on hope here and have their sights set on the next habitat. It's the only thing that makes any sense to me, as to why they deny science and could care less about the future of this planet, and it goes hand and hand with Christianity's notion of heaven and the afterlife. World leaders with religious beliefs and a dark worldview are incredibly dangerous because they are actively pursuing the end of the world, and they make policy decisions based on those apocalyptic visions, which could actually bring them about. Induced prophecies. It's absolutely nuts. I think the interview with Steve Bannon prior to his expulsion from the White House shed a lot of light on this common worldview, and his words were probably half as extreme as his actual beliefs.

MRR: You all are deeply connected with the Portland and West Coast punk and hardcore community. How has your involvement and view of this community changed over time?

Will: I'm not the best one to answer this one, as I am not too involved anymore—life and having kids tend to do that—but things do seem quite healthy up here. Portland has always had a bit of a rut with retro punk type shit, but there seem to be a fair amount of bands not falling into that trap. There are so many bands it's hard to keep track, and I am actually paying attention. It's really very bizarre to be in my 40s and still doing this. When I was younger there was simply no paradigm for this. Anyone over 28, 29, 30, just kind of melted away. There were no older punkers, they were at "the bar across the street." I have to admit, I do now sometimes go to the "bar across the street," but to me, all ages shows will always be the life's blood of this scene.

Jonathan: I have been in Portland now for well over a decade, so the scene has grown quite a bit over that time. I really love seeing the different generations of people in Portland's punk community. Many older members of the scene have really invested themselves, personally and financially, which has been huge in laying a foundation for the next group of punks to come and shake things up. Look at what Keith and Alex are doing with Blackwater, a great example—the record store, recording and practice studios, and of course the venue. This is such a foundation that allows the music and art that comes from the punks to thrive. A decade ago we often booked house shows, largely out of necessity. Now, I love a good house show, but without legit venues in Portland in 2018, the scene would be hurting. There are so many new bands popping up, putting out great music, that would struggle to perform and engage the community at large without the great roots that have been growing in this city for decades now. I am definitely less involved these days, as so much of my time is spent with my daughter and wife, a trade off that is well worth it! But this is a place and community where people can find a balance between the adult crash and punk rock.

Erik: I dedicated the majority of my adult life to being active in the punk scene, both in the Midwest and the last eighteen years in Portland, but these days I work too much to be able to be as involved as I would like to. I am admittedly a workaholic, but it's hopefully a temporary means to an easier life with more free time and resources to put back into my community.

MRR: Tell us about your future plans. Any tours or further recordings in the works?

Jonathan: We are writing songs and planning to record again this spring for a couple of releases we have planned, hopefully with a European pressing in the mix. Touring…we need to get out on the road this summer. Fingers crossed!

Will: We are working on many new songs to follow up the demo, which is being released as a 12", and we should have new stuff out soon. We, if responsibilities allow, will tour this year. I know in this day and age it's hard to feel that anything we do can make a difference, but it can, it has to. I will never forget the impact the protest at Standing Rock made, the feeling we all had seeing Black Lives Matter at Ferguson. Gather our strength together against fascism, against racism, because things will only get worse if we don't. Love to all, *life and liberty*! *Death Ridge Boys.*

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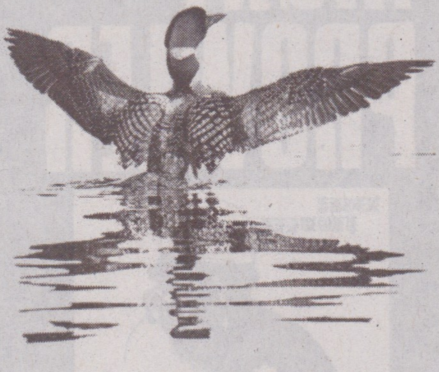

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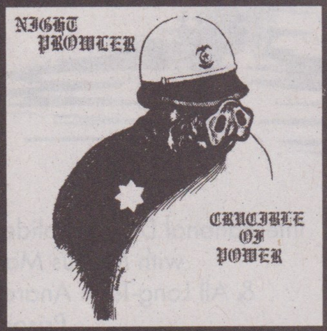
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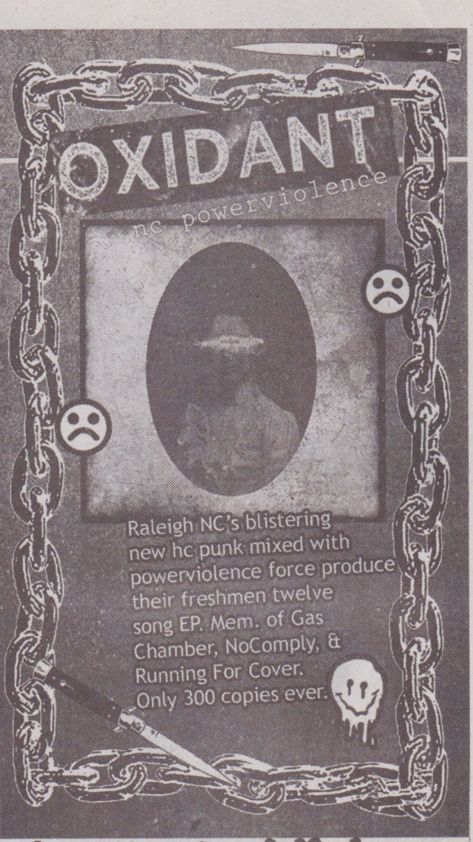
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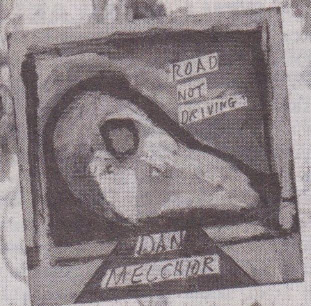
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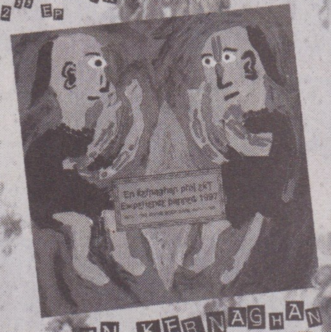
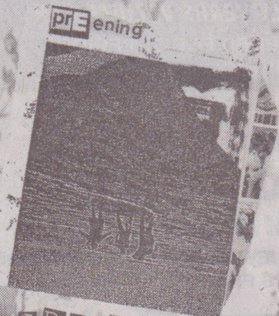
GAD WHIP
In A Room
12" EP



EN KERNAGHAN
Divine Body Care
7"



PREENING
Greasetrap Frisbee
7"

https://evernever-records.bandcamp.com/

Rich Stanley (Drug Sweat / Ooga Boogas / Aarght Records CEO) sits down for a chai and a chinwag with Melbourne's most rockin' punk / glam crossover combo Miss Destiny. The gals have an LP out on RIP Society and a hot new 7" on drummer Kirk's Shipping Steel label, both available in the US through Total Punk Records. Crack a coldie, fire up the hair straightener, and dig.

Harriet "Huddo" Hudson (vox & guitar)
Harriet "Stewey" Stewart (guitar & vox)
Annie Llewellyn (bass & vox)
Kirk "Skirt" Scotcher (drums)

Photos by David Forcier.

SMOKING PROHIBITED
THIS MEANS TONY ONLY

MRR: What were you doing, Huddo, when you got the idea to start a savage rock'n'roll band?
Harriet "Huddo" Hudson: We were more a garage band when we started out—our old drummer Brett dreamed up the band idea. He thought of the band name (named after a drag queen from a book called *City of Night*), and he wanted there to be girls in it. I have no idea what I was up to at the time, though, probably watching TV.

MRR: And when was all this?
Huddo: Maybe 2013?

MRR: Who was in it then? Was Annie a member from the get go?
Huddo: Nah, it was a guy from Brisbane called Casper on bass, then we had Pat from Bitch Prefect, and *then* Annie joined, thank god. She was great from the first jam onwards. Haz and I are the only original members.
Annie Llewellyn: I think the first gig we played together might have been with Hunx and His Punx and Shannon and the Clams.

MRR: Were you a big fan of Miss Destiny and stoked to get the call up?
Annie: Oh my god, yes. I'd been to a couple of Miss Destiny gigs and had such a band crush.

MRR: Sick. Had you played in bands before?
Annie: Harriet Stewart called me and asked if I played bass in the Angel and Baby Chain, and I said "nah, guitar," and she said "oh damn, we need a bass player," and I practically yelled "*I can play bass too!*"

MRR: So Brett comes to you, Hazzy, and says "Let's rock." The two of you decide on H-Stew, or...?
Huddo: Oh yeah—so he said "who is a cool chick we can ask to be in the band?" and I suggested her. So we got extremely drunk and had a jam at her joint. We had a really false feeling of *yerrrrr* at the first jam because we were so wasted. Actually, Haz has the recordings somewhere, they're pretty funny. It's cute because she yells out "thank you Sydney Opera House" at one point as a joke, and then we actually did play at the Opera House!
Kirk "Skirt" Scotcher: Do we still play any OG songs?
Huddo: Yeah, the first song we ever made up is "My Destiny" off of the LP.
Skirt: That's a fave.
Huddo: "House of Wax," "The One" are all OG, so is "Will You Listen"—that might be it. We had some real shockers.

MRR: What's "My Destiny" about?
Huddo: "My Destiny" is about when someone who is a real drag is just all up in your shit. Like you leave the house and can't seem to not see them. Like "oh great—it's *you*."
Skirt: ...then they bottled you?
Huddo: I think that's a metaphor, Kirk...

MRR: Can you name anyone in particular at the time?
Huddo: I can't remember who I was shitted off at back then. Maybe it was myself.
Skirt: Which drummer of Miss Destiny has shitted you off the least? Gotta be Janno (Emily Jans)?
Huddo: She got pregnant and quit the band, though. Maybe she's the worst...Just kidding, I love than woman with all my soul.

MRR: So we had Brett on the skins for the first year or so, and the first EP. Then we get Em in for a couple of gigs, an LP, and a conception in 2015. How'd you get this Kürk bloke in?
Huddo: We had already done a band together before—Ratsak—so I recommended him to the gals

MRR: Oh yeah, I forgot Kirk was in Ratsak!
Huddo: Everyone's favourite Melbourne band, Ratsak. We played with Limp Wrist one time, and I looked at the video of it the other day. I look *so* out of place. Like it looks like someone's mum wandered up and joined in. I'm wearing a really daggy summer dress, just up there havin' a little turn.
Skirt: When Janno joined Miss Destiny, I was so psyched, I think I even offered to release a record on my then-conceptual label. Now I drum and have released a 7", so all my wildest dreams have come true.

MRR: Were you worried about filling her combat boots?
Skirt: Janno had tagged me out of Bloody Hammer a few years prior...we are pretty compatible at mid-paced rocker tempo.
Huddo: Remember when they played at Tristan's place and you were enjoying them as a punter and Yeap was like "would it be alright if I tried to fight Kirk tonight?" and everyone was like "no it wouldn't." *[laughter]*
Skirt: *[laughter]* That was peak period of hostility toward everyone's favourite Kirk...But it's sweet now, and everyone is enjoying a long period of peace. I should have just gotten pregnant to bail out of Kromosom.

MRR: Were you being Kirk the Jerk? I didn't know about this, tell me, tell me!
Skirt: This is ancient history now, but I told Kromosom I wanted out after the first US tour, and let's say it wasn't handled very well. We're all good now though, older, uglier, and more mature.
Huddo: They reckoned their brother was stabbing them in the back by quitting the band, and they went a bit silly, but luckily the hatchet has been buried. Life's too short, right boys?

MRR: Poor old Kirk. I was hoping it might have been Kirk going around knocking cheeseburgers out of punks' hands or something. Or perhaps calling out the answers at trivia.
Skirt: Around that time I was prone to gleefully knocking things out of people's hands, so perhaps it's not poor old Kirk after all.

MRR: How does the songwriting happen? Who's the main riff master? Do songs get made up in the jam room or are you crafting them at home and bringing them in?
Huddo: It used to be either me or Haz rocking up with the idea, but then later on we all started doin' it.
Harriet "Stewie" Stewart: Our way for this new stuff is a main riff is brought in and used as a base for everyone to contribute to and arrange bridges, solos, rhythms...It's all added in the jam.
Annie: We all feel comfortable to send something really rough and crappy to each other and not take feedback personally, which makes it easy. We all like writing songs about naughty chicks.

MRR: Do you let 'em go and feel your way through for the right places to change or stop and discuss?
Huddo: I would say stop and discuss.

MRR: In my experience, that's where the brawls begin.
Huddo: ...Or stop and order a pizza. We've never had a band brawl.
Stewie: We don't fight and we all accept that Huddo is the main boss.

MRR: Are all the lyrics yours, Huddo?
Huddo: No, definitely not. We all contribute.
Stewie: She definitely writes 80% of the lyrics.
Huddo: I will get writer's block so bad, and then one of these guys will just come up with a magical line and then the rest just flows out. Like with the song "Killers," Annie texted me the opening line as an idea then the rest of the song followed.
Stewie: Harriet will be like "what rhymes with dragon?" and someone will be like "um...flagon?"
Huddo: *[laughter]* Also sometimes we flick through the newspaper for lyrics ideas, like the song "Ice Queen" came from an article about what's her name... The Wangaratta meth dealer lady?
Stewie: Jessica Forgarty. For "Randy" I really wanted a romantic track using a man's name—like the way '50s rock'n'rollers wrote tracks using a woman's name.
Skirt: I remember noticing how inclusive and chill y'all were with songwriting when I first joined. I'd go so far as to say it was fun.
Stewie: Big egos = *Use Your Illusions 1 + 2.*
Huddo: Yeah, like all of us sitting around a glittery notebook. Like literally.

MRR: Have there ever been any violent incidents at your gigs?
Huddo: Well, there was the time at the Essendon squat (now burnt down—RIP) where I got knocked over by the mosh and then clocked a guy over the head with my strat. Then in Brisbane Stewie whacked a guy on the head who tried to start a punch up. I think it was the same guy who stood at the front and mimed doing a long lick between my legs—*what a psycho*. And then there was a punchup at a Tote front bar gig between two blokes too 'cause they didn't wanna give the girls a turn of the attention, I guess. Once I poured a beer down Nic Imfeld from Tryannamen's arse crack, but that was just when I was watching a band.
Stewie: At Jerk Fest, I threatened to glass someone in the Power pit 'cause he was staunching Huddo for throwing some pink Vodka Cruiser at him.
Huddo: Actually, I think he was really mad because I snatched a beer out of his hand and threw it away into the crowd, which is fair enough...I think when there's a mosh and I'm drunk enough, I start taking out all my frustration at blokes in the past on poor strangers. If you're reading this—I'm sorry, brother. I must have stolen that beer trick off Kirk. I have definitely seen him do that before.
Stewie: And I am sorry for holding a glass bottle to your face and yelling "I will end you!"
Huddo: Just snatching someone's can of beer and throwing it away from them as hard as you can—what a dick move.
Stewie: I love it.
Huddo: Sometimes I take guys' caps and beanies off and frisbee them away at gigs too.

MRR: Tell us about your US tour. What was the best gig you played?
Stewie: Pittsburgh was sick.
Annie: Ventura was mad because it was a small bar with lots of scary regulars. I wasn't sure if everyone was really getting into it or really getting into each other.
Huddo: I think my fave was at the Metro in Oakland with Lech Gaze and Genuine Parts, but we also played a generator show at a swamp in Pittsburgh that was funny—a great crusty Motörhead style back called Mower played first.
Stewie: ...and NYC!
Huddo: Oh yeah, NYC was fun—we played with Cheena.
Skirt: That bowling alley show in L.A. where the owner cracked the shits and kicked everyone out was my fave.
Huddo: *[laughter]* Zaryan from Lech Gaze got kicked out of the venue at that gig during their own set because he wandered into the kitchen during a non-singing part.
MRR: How pissed do the gals get at practice?

Huddo: We're like grandmas these days but we've had some shockers.

MRR: Choof?
Huddo: Yes actually. There was one time when the three gals decided we wanted to get stoned. We made Kirk drive us to a really sketchy apartment to get it. It was an Aussie rapper's joint. Then we just put on metal and sang along with the mics instead of actually jamming.

MRR: Ever been arrested at a gig?
Stewie: I think I may well be the only Dest to have been arrested at all.

MRR: Go on...
Stewie: I love petty crime a lot, so I have been been thrown in the slammer on a number of occasions, but a cool one was when I got arrested on the news at a picket line when I was working as a union official. The filthy cop slammed me on the ground and cuffed me to show everyone else what was gonna happen to them. When I got out of the clink the next morning, all the workers from the line were there with snacks and cheers. It was my best arrest by far.
Huddo: That rocks.

MRR: Who'd end up boss bitch in a *Lord Of The Flies* or *Battle Royale* sort of situation?
Stewie: Huddo, of course—the rest of us organize gigs being paid in socks as the opening 6 pm band. She's the one with the clue.
Huddo: Here's a question—what actresses do you guys reckon would play us three in a movie? I reckon one of Angelina Jolie's blonde kids would play me.
Annie: Mischa Barton. She is more like my spirit animal, so maybe Chloe Sevigny.
Huddo: Sandra Bullock would play Kirk.
Stewie: I want Bette Midler to play me. Greg from Danava can play Skirt.

MRR: Who would direct?
Stewie: Alfred Hitchcock. Wait, no—Werner Herzog. Also, I have decided I want Naomi Watts to play me—I bet she does a great Kiwi accent.

MRR: Who would you book to play your farewell gig and where would it be?
Annie: Surely it would have to be at the Tote. I'd love to play with Heavy Load.

MRR: Just one final lap of the inner north...
Skirt: I was gonna say a good old fashioned front bar show at the Home Of Rock with the Skids and Power and everyone lined up with fresh tinnies for us to slap out of their hands.
Huddo: And then everyone from all the bands comes on at the end to do "God Gave Rock And Roll To You."
Stewie: That or we play Carlton Cemetery with Danzig.
Huddo: And then we can play a secret show at my dead boyfriend Peter Steele's grave...all ages / BYO of course, just rage through a hole in the fence to enter.
Stewie: Then we do a double headline unplugged show with Gunners at the Tramway—finish the show with both bands playing "Patience" together—like a puss acoustic version of Motörhead and Girlschool—to be honest, even I wouldn't go to that show. *[laughter]*
Huddo: Someone say a punchy one liner to end the interview
Stewie: What's worse than missing your destiny? Miss Destiny.

Miss Destiny "Ice Queen / Randy" 7"
on Shipping Steel Records
available in the US through Total Punk.

CAREFUL NOT TO CRY

When's the last time you watched a feature film without corporate—or crowdfunded—ties, without a "story based on..." or bottom line? In this day and age, Erik Sutch's debut film, Careful Not to Cry, is a radical work.

Careful Not to Cry (CNTC) follows Claire (Meka Butler), an abortion doctor in post-industrial America who drives a taxi while waiting for her clinic to reopen after a restrictive state law gets them temporarily shut down. The state senator (Bruce Crocker) who was instrumental in passing the legislation has a heart attack and dies in her backseat, and she forges a weird bond with his wife (Suzanne Sadler) and daughter (Sé Marie).

To be clear, Careful Not to Cry is not a documentary, nor like anything you've ever seen. It's at once funny, surreal, and militantly pro-access. Look out for it in theaters and at festivals across the country—NYC, Toronto, DC, New Orleans, L.A., and more. Proceeds benefit local abortion funds in each city, and hey, if you want to set up a screening near you, contact Erik Sutch (eriksutch@gmail.com). In the conversation that follows, he goes in on the freedom of self-financing, subverting the film status quo, and finding fabrics by flashlight in Vietnam.

Interview with Careful Not to Cry filmmaker Erik Sutch by Lila Tublin. Photos provided by Erik Sutch.

MRR: Where'd the story for *Careful Not to Cry* originate? Did everything come to you at once, or did you develop the story over a while?
I had the original ideas for the first and last scene while I was on vacation in Vietnam. I was in a beach town where they'd lose electricity at random times, and everyone would function normally without it. When electricity cut out at night, it was pitch black—you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. During one of these blackouts, a dressmaker ushered us into her store with a flashlight and I got the idea for the last scene—and everything that walking around a fabric store in darkness with flashlights could mean. That night, I went back to my hotel room and started writing the last scene immediately. The next morning I got up and started writing what would become the first scene. I had to open the movie with a dead man to launch us into the story of these women, similar to how so much in media starts with a dead woman as what gets us into the stories of men.

MRR: Are you talking about stuff like *Twin Peaks*? Laura Palmer dies and Agent Cooper swoops in to save the day?
Yes, but it's not like any one show in particular is to blame for tropes like that, but rather that you see them so often. That cliché of a dead woman leading to a story of a man finding himself. I'd say *Twin Peaks* flipped this idea on its head and did something extraordinary with it. I tried completely reversing it in *Careful Not to Cry*.

MRR: *Careful Not to Cry* is your first feature film, but did you ever dip into the world of shorts?
I made a few shorts in college and remember two: one starring a ballerina dancing around the city inspired by the works of Maya Deren, and one experimental film where I ran around Manhattan and at the end of every block, I threw the film camera in the air and caught it.

MRR: Any interest in riding down the short lane? Would making short films be easier than full-lengths?
I'm open to making more short films or music videos, but it's not where my mind is at right now. I'm more interested in the creative challenge of telling a long-form story with limited budget constraints. Sometimes I'll see short films that cost $20–30k—sometimes even more—and think about how I would have made a feature-length adaptation with the same budget. Feature films are what I normally seek out and watch, so I want to tell a story in the same medium that I generally consume.

MRR: What was your writing process like?
I start with some general ideas of scenes and themes I want to address in the film. Then I see what works well together, and what I'm able to start as separate in the beginning and bring together by the end. I'll have some vague ideas about the settings as well, that will soon become concrete (out of convenience). Then I'll decide who the characters should be, how the film can function through people. I put scattered ideas into a notebook and then go through and organize them into dialogue and decide if I can apply it to any of the characters I've created for the film. I'll have hundreds of pages of notes related to the themes of the film that I want to address, daily routines for the characters, bits and bobs of dialogue, and eventually get it down to an 80-90 page script. Revising is my favorite part of writing, the ideas come out so boring at first and can get sculpted into something beautiful once you rewrite them.

MRR: Are any of the characters inspired by anyone you've met?
They're all from my head. I did talk with some people who work in the movement for abortion access and had them read the script as I went along to make sure there were no glaring inaccuracies. But besides that, I jot down pages and pages of notes about character ideas and dialogues and whittle them down into shapes of how people interact and communicate.

MRR: Can you talk a little about some of the characters and how they interact in the film?
The protagonist of the film is Claire, an abortion doctor who is moonlighting as a cab driver while she's unable to practice. In the film, she is immediately confronted with the death of the lawmaker who was crucial in passing the legislation that temporarily closed the clinic she works for. She calls her friend who helps her out of the pickle. Her friend, played by Linda Kanyarusoke, is more optimistic about the man's death, thinking that the younger folks will come in and be more progressive. Sadly, as we've seen, especially as of late, that's just not the case. People think "oh, things will get better as the older more conservative folks fade away," but rampant racism and misogyny are strong in a good chunk of the youth, so it's a constant fight to beat them back and keep those forces out of power. Claire is experienced in her profession, so she knows this. Her younger co-worker isn't so aware of it yet, but learns over the course of the film.

MRR: The film really takes a turn when the dead state senator's daughter gets involved. How did you write that character into Claire's life?
Monica shows up to Claire's front door entitled as ever, thinking she can find a friend in this woman who was so affected by her father's politics. Monica had moved to the city a year or so before the start of the film, and this is her first time back in the state she grew up in. She was estranged from her father and never made up before he died, and I don't think there's much regret in that. A big part of the film for me is focusing on the effects of white masculinity in a place where it has no business being. Both of these women were similarly affected by the bad ideas of white guys, and even though Claire is a bit hesitant at first, she sees beyond Monica's entitlement issues and knows there's someone well-intentioned cutting through there. Monica also confronts her mother while in town, disappointed in this woman who raised her but also stood idly letting her husband take power and control away from the people who need it.

MRR: What was the hardest part—to start or see it though?
It was definitely harder to get started than keep going. I had been wanting to make a film for awhile and could never write a story or create characters I was really in love with. I always wanted to make something that I was interested in, and waited until I had all the parts in place to make this happen. I must have written dozens of story ideas with fleshed out characters before I really landed on something that I was really interested in sticking with for the year-plus it took to bring *Careful Not to Cry* to a place where I was totally happy with it.

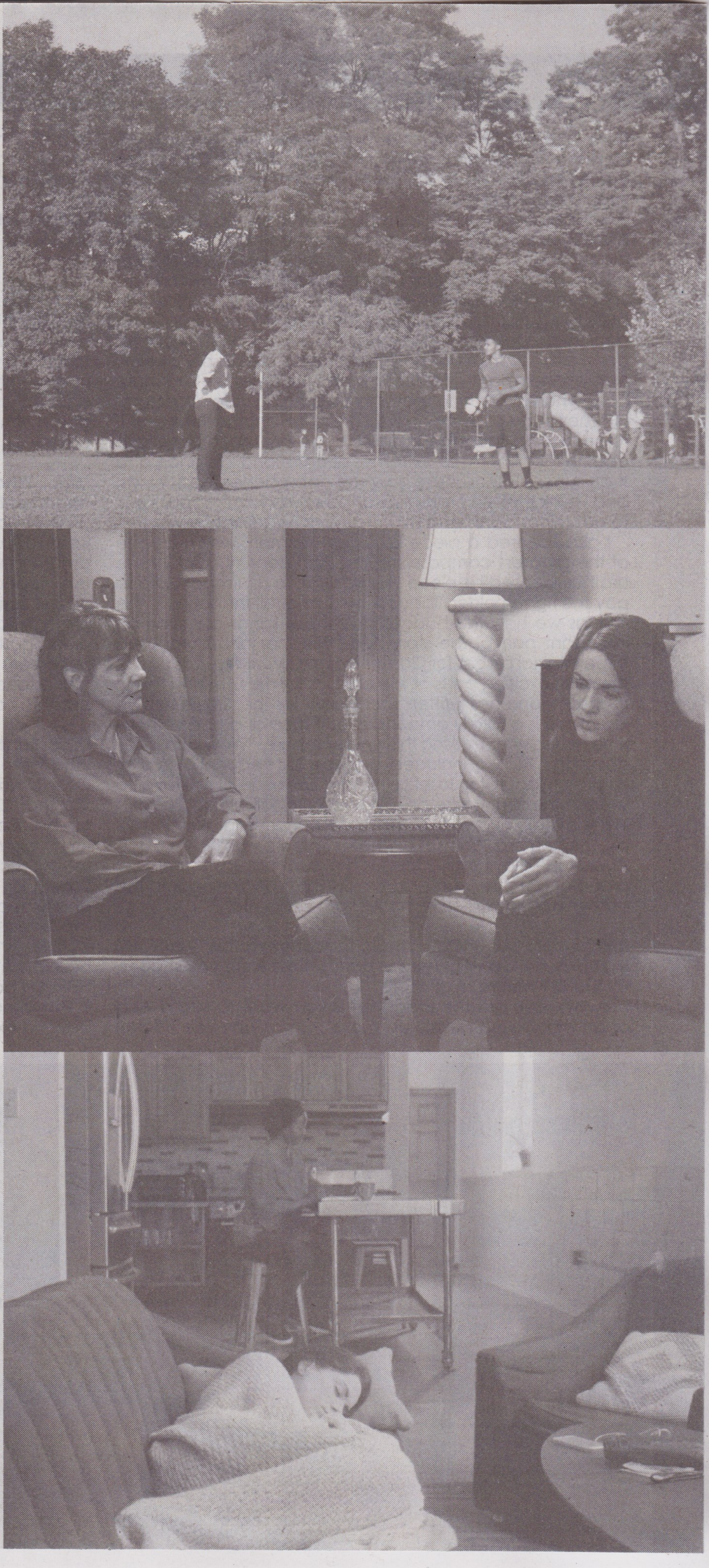
MRR: What parts needed to get in what places?
Just making sure it was an idea I was really committed to and wanted to see through to the end. It's easy to be excited about a new idea for a week—or even a month—but for *Careful Not to Cry*, I'm still excited about it even after wrapping post-production. I think the key to getting to this place is introducing fresh characters into a world you don't always see them in. The story has also unfortunately remained politically relevant, whether looking at it as a tale of people seeking greater abortion access or one about overreaching masculinity in a world where it has no place.

MRR: Do you think that sometimes people make things that they think *other* people are interested in? I love that *Careful Not to Cry* feels like something truly genuine.
Yeah, I think so. When you're working with someone else's money, you have a responsibility to them. You have to make something that is all-around accessible in some way to make their investment back, and get it out in front of paying eyeballs as soon as possible. It's annoying because there aren't enough original stories being told. But when you're self-financing your own projects, you can tailor it to be exactly what you want it to be. It seems like films are more easily greenlit if they're showing or saying something audiences recognize and are already comfortable with, which is pretty backwards from how art—and especially film—should be.

MRR: So *Careful Not to Cry* was self-financed?
Yes. I split the budget with my friend Shawn, who's a dog walker and young entrepreneur. We each retain 50 / 50 ownership of the film. If *MRR* had a "30 Under 30" like Forbes does, Shawn would make the cut. His business acumen is extremely impressive, and he assured me I would have full creative freedom on the project even with his money involved.

MRR: That's awesome. What's it like have a real budget and not having to compromise anything?
The freedom of financing your own project and working for yourself is so necessary in contemporary art. I own this movie now, and I don't owe anyone anything—no investments, no crowdfunding rewards, nothing. I can take my time with the rollout. I wanted to do benefit screenings for local abortion funds tied to the film, so I've been doing that instead of being out there desperate to recoup. Being privileged enough to work a full-time job alongside my work in film has helped tremendously because money is always coming in, and I'm able to live comfortably and not panic about getting this project sold. I can roll it out into the world at my own pace. Film is instant, but it is also forever. I'm as excited about the reactions to the film next week as I am about those twenty years from now.

MRR: Did you use any of your connections



from your full-time job as a music supervisor to reach out to artists to use their songs in *Careful Not to Cry*? ...Are you even allowed to talk about brokering those deals or supporting those artists?
A couple years ago the company I work for did a spot with Moses Sumney, and the producer of the film Jacob Z. Gross played it for me on set and suggested it play over the last scene. I also worked with Light in the Attic on licensing Shin Joong-hyun's "I Don't Like" for the opening credits. The lyrics are sung in Korean, but they roughly translate to, "*I don't want to, don't even want to cry / I don't want to, don't even want to laugh*," and I found that to be a pretty appropriate mantra for the film and the times we're in right now, when everything seems to be pushing us to dissociate. But the sound of the song is so beautiful and hopeful and it forces you to face the troubles head-on, much like Claire does in the film. Those extremes of emotional distance and then super closeness are how she approaches most things, and I think that's a pretty reasonable way to go about life—to get things done and still keep your head above water.

I also licensed a piece by Julius Eastman, who was one of the greatest composers in the 20th century, and whose brother licensed his piece "Femenine" to us. I made sure to pay the rights holders fairly for the use of all the songs in the film, as we had the budget and those songs are such an important part of the story. Matt Fletcher also composed three original pieces for *Careful Not to Cry*, which was one of the most exciting parts of the process for me. Hearing music that someone has written specifically for the movie you've just made is a totally amazing experience and one of those times when I was making this where I felt like, "Wow I am really doing this." I also included a piece by frequent Kendrick Lamar collaborator Josef Leimberg, over one of my favorite shots in the film. Claire and Monica are talking at a bench in the middle of a velodrome while runners and cyclists pass by. The camera zooms in on them super slow as "Spirits of the Ancestors" plays softly. Scenes like that make me feel very proud of both the career in film I am just beginning and the career in music supervision that I am years into.

MRR: Before supervising music for commercials, you went to shows in DC and played in bands. How were you shaped by the DIY nature of all that?
I always enjoyed the idea that if you want to see a kind of art that doesn't exist, just make it. That way you control exactly what you want to see or hear, and you don't have to rely on anybody else to make it—and if other people like it too, then it's a nice bonus.

MRR: What are some of the cinematic influences you drew from while developing *Careful Not to Cry*?
My main influences for this movie were filmmakers like Hong Sang-soo, Joanna Hogg, Steven Soderbergh—people who have really utilized low budgets and made them feel like big things. I just saw Guillermo del Toro talk and he mentioned, "When you're making a movie, only look to movies of a different genre for inspiration," and I agree completely. After wrapping the shoot, I saw the movies *Elle* and *Columbus*, and realized those are both trying to get across similar ideas to *Careful Not to Cry*, so I guess you could call those my after-influences.

MRR: What was it like making a movie from your apartment?
Well, pre-production was basically doing my full-time job from 10:00 am–7:00 pm, then taking an hour for dinner and diving right into working on the film from like 8:00 pm–3:00 am. Repeating that over and over, whether I was working on the script, storyboards, casting, or anything else. It was pretty wild, but I don't much like sleeping anyway so it didn't bother me. There's a loneliness in the night that was necessary to write this film that focuses so much on working alone, and taking policy into your own hands as much as possible from the position of someone who isn't in office.

MRR: But that solitary work stops once production starts. Who were some of the key people you hired that made *Careful Not to Cry* come to life?
We shot *Careful Not to Cry* in Pittsburgh, and I made the trip back and forth from NYC to there probably six or seven times during production. The schedule for shooting was pretty hectic, but I was so proud we were able to stay on schedule for most of the film. I credit that to a reliable crew, and especially my producer, Jacob Z. Gross, who stayed on top of everyone's needs on set. We made sure everyone was healthy, happy, and hydrated. Triple H is the greatest heel in the history of professional wrestling, but on a film set, HHH is a babyface all the way!

The Director of Photography, Danielle Calodney, has far beyond expert knowledge of the camera she used to film,

which made everything so smooth too. She was able to translate my vision to the technical crew and set up the shots efficiently and seamlessly. I wanted to hire as many women in the crew as I could, especially since the cast was primarily made up of women. Creating an inclusive space for women to thrive in cinema is one of the most important things for me to do as a male filmmaker.

MRR: In the movie, Claire is unable to perform abortions and drives a cab in the meantime. Why'd you decide to make her drive?
I initially started writing the film as a way to focus on her day-to-day life during the in-between phase when her clinic has been shut down until it eventually reopens. I felt like focusing on this period of her life could show a person in the middle of a crisis still living her life with the people around her. Plus, I wanted to normalize the role of an abortion provider as a way to reduce the stigma surrounding abortion. We have a perfect medical procedure that allows for people to take control of their lives, and still it's looked at as controversial at every end of the political spectrum. I started writing the script in the Obama-era as a piece suggesting that we didn't push hard enough to get our policies even further to the left. Now it's hard to imagine anything could have gone *more* wrong politically. Abortion access is non-negotiable, it needs to be available for everyone.

MRR: What do you think the future holds for access?
I am optimistic because all of the people involved in the fight tend to keep the focus on access for anyone who needs or wants an abortion. I am less optimistic when I think about the decision makers pushing the least abortion-friendly policies in decades. The future depends on our persistence in making sure abortion access remains at the top of the agenda to combat those pushing against it. It's hard to think about what we can do as people who are not policymakers, but I think just working to normalize abortion through conversation is a good step. It's this perfect procedure that helps people take control of their lives—it shouldn't be controversial.

MRR: Any fear of conservative wingnuts protesting *Careful Not to Cry*?
The movie speaks mostly to the left. I think a lot of folks on the right won't budge when it comes to abortion access, but the left needs to be reminded just how important and relevant this issue is sometimes. I don't think anyone from the right will protest against *Careful Not to Cry*—let alone see it. I'm really not too interested in speaking to them, and I certainly don't want to be attacked, but I would engage with them if anything came up. I like the movie but I don't wanna die for it. I have a perpetual fear of conservative wingnuts that would exist whether or not I made this film. I don't really run into any too often, but I certainly know that they're there.

MRR: Are you working on any new film projects now, between screenings of *Careful Not to Cry*?
I've got a few scripts at various stages. They're all at different budget levels too, so I want to see if I can get some more investors on board for movie two. If I can't, then I'll just use my own money again. I'm looking to shoot in New York for the next one. Two of the scripts I've nearly finished take place in New York. I wrote and revised 70 pages for one in less than a month, and the other I've had lingering for a little over a year—it has existed in about a dozen different iterations. My Director of Photography, Danielle, was like "You just have to buckle down, pick one, and shoot it," so we will probably do that soon. It's about a family dynamic where adult children turn out to be more conservative than their parents. I want to use a title that Fassbinder once drafted but never used, "The Marriages of Our Parents." I'm looking at things like his film *Chinese Roulette*, and Joanna Hogg's *Archipelago* for inspiration.

While I'm really excited about working on future projects, I'm also dedicating some time to getting *Careful Not to Cry* out there. What's the point of working hard and making these movies if nobody is able to see them? Screenings have been a lot of fun, and even when I'm not able to make the screenings, it's been really cool getting emails from people with comments. I want to hear about what people like and don't like about it, so I know what to improve upon for the next one!

Go see Careful Not to Cry *and tell Erik what you think about it. Screenings are coming up in cities all over in the next few months. Email eriksutch@gmail.com if you want to set one up or find out where you can see it.*

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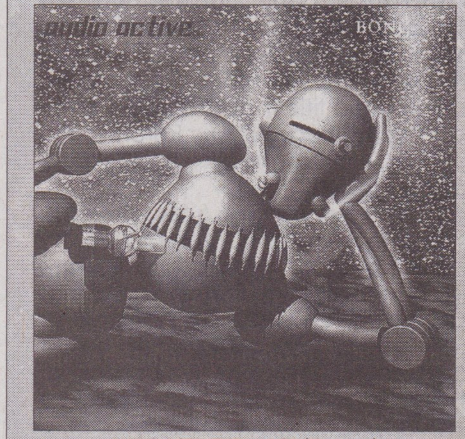

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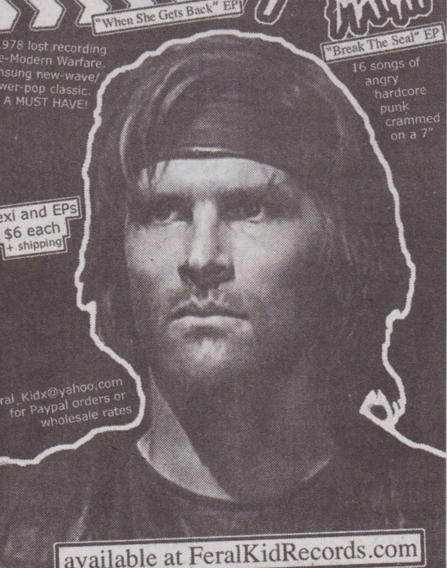

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MOVIES

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Since this is issue #420 of *MRR* I thought it might be fun(ny) to write a column about stoner films. When I went looking for some, I realized I don't really like stoner films. Why would I want to endure that viewing? So much for my cutesy plan. However, I did manage to dig up some films that are somewhat reefer adjacent.

The first is **Dead On Arrival: The Punk Documentary That Almost Never Was**. This two-hour documentary is a Blu-ray extra. You can find it on the official release of **DOA: A Right Of Passage**, the 1980 film that documented the '70s English punk scene with an emphasis on the Sex Pistols US tour. I have seen **DOA: A Right Of Passage** many times on scratchy prints in theaters and on bootleg video tapes. This Blu-ray version is the best I have ever seen it. The picture is so clear it doesn't seem right.

DOA: A Right Of Passage was the idea of Tom Forcade, who founded *High Times* magazine. **Dead On Arrival: The Punk Documentary That Almost Never Was** tells the story of how the film came about. The main talking head in **Dead On Arrival: The Punk Documentary That Almost Never Was** is John Holmstrom of *Punk* magazine. For his day job Holmstrom was working for *Bananas* magazine and met Forcade. Forcade was already a fan of punk music and decided to distribute *Punk* magazine. It was Forcade's idea that they cover the Sex Pistols' US tour. He knew that it was going to be important.

Forcade had a reputation of not playing nice with the other '60s hippies, and that carried over to his dealings with the Sex Pistols' US label, Warner Brothers. He could not get permission to cover the tour. Instead, the film's director Lech Kowalski and crew went about it guerrilla style. They would pose as journalists and local TV crews to get to film the shows. Since the tour was such a media circus, it was not difficult. The only obstacles were the biker bodyguards Warner Brothers hired to protect the Pistols. The resulting film consists of short clips from each of the seven Pistols shows. Holmstrom and *Punk* photographer Roberta Bayley covered the shows for the magazine separately from the film crew. Bayley claims they never saw Kowalski or the other crew members.

Dead On Arrival: The Punk Documentary That Almost Never Was clears up a lot of questions about the original film. There are many people who were involved that are interviewed. Most glaringly absent is director Lech Kowalski. Holmstrom off-handedly mentions that it was Kowalski who pointed out that *High Times* owned the film and perhaps they could release it. He seems to still be involved. It's too bad he was not interviewed. However, some of the other people interviewed are almost as important. Rufus Standefer was working for the Atlanta camera rental house where Kowalski rented the equipment. Standefer was sent by the rental company to keep an eye on the New Yorker and ended up helping out as a cinematographer. He didn't know the Sex Pistols, but said after seeing them "I was a fan very quickly." He recalls how in San Francisco notoriously sleazy promoter Bill Graham told the film crew they couldn't shoot on the streets. Naturally, they ignored him.

Also interviewed are sound man David King and Mary Killen, who was a crew member when they shot in England. Ultravox singer Midge Ure recalls how McLaren asked him to be the singer for a band he was starting, presumably the one that ended up being the Sex Pistols. Ure also claims he had never seen the Rich Kids footage in **DOA: A Right Of Passage** until it was shown to him at this interview. Most surprising is Lamar St. John, who was a fan interviewed in film. She went to the San Antonio show from L.A. with some other punks. She gave Sid a bloody nose while she was trying to climb on stage. She is interviewed for **DOA: A Right Of Passage** while lying in the dirt in front of the club, thrown there by the bouncers.

Most of **Dead On Arrival: The Punk Documentary That Almost Never Was** focuses on the trials and tribulations of trying to film the Sex Pistols on tour. That is an essential part of the story. After so many years of hearing the story of the US tour from Malcolm McLaren or Johnny Rotten, who obviously each had their reputation and career to look after, it is a revelation to hear from people who were there and witnessed everything that went down. I suppose these people could also have their own agenda, but most come across as still amused that they got to see it all. Then I rewatched **DOA: A Right Of Passage** with a whole new appreciation. (mvdvisual.com)

Bad Brains are in my top ten of bands I have ever seen play live. Fortunately, I have never seen one of the shows when HR refused to sing, did not show up, or was simply replaced with another singer. My personal memories of the band remain positive. Watching the documentary **Finding Joseph I** is heartbreaking as well as reassuring.

Finding Joseph I looks at the musical career and personal life of Bad Brains singer Paul Hudson, more widely known as HR. He also goes by Joseph I. As with many musicians and artists, HR explores various styles and experiences. He was a great swimmer as a child. He was thought to be a potential Olympian. When the Bad Brains formed, they wanted to be the fastest band. HR's interest then turned to reggae music and Rastafarianism. He continued to grow and expand, but this also seemed to unleash something darker from within.

Understandably, **Finding Joseph I** doesn't and probably can't explain the inner workings of HR. It makes the attempt, but full knowledge of any individual's mindscape is impossible. The viewer is left admiring HR for following his own path. It usually leads him back to music, but his music and musical responsibilities do not hold him back. That is usually to the detriment of his band and his fans. You also feel extremely concerned that his mental health is going unchecked. That is until he meets his wife.

Finding Joseph I concentrates on its subject, which is interwoven with the story of his most famous band, Bad Brains. However, it glosses over the band's history. If you are looking for a more concise, full biography of the Bad Brains, check out the 2012 documentary **Bad Brains: A Band In DC**. (hrdocumentary.com)

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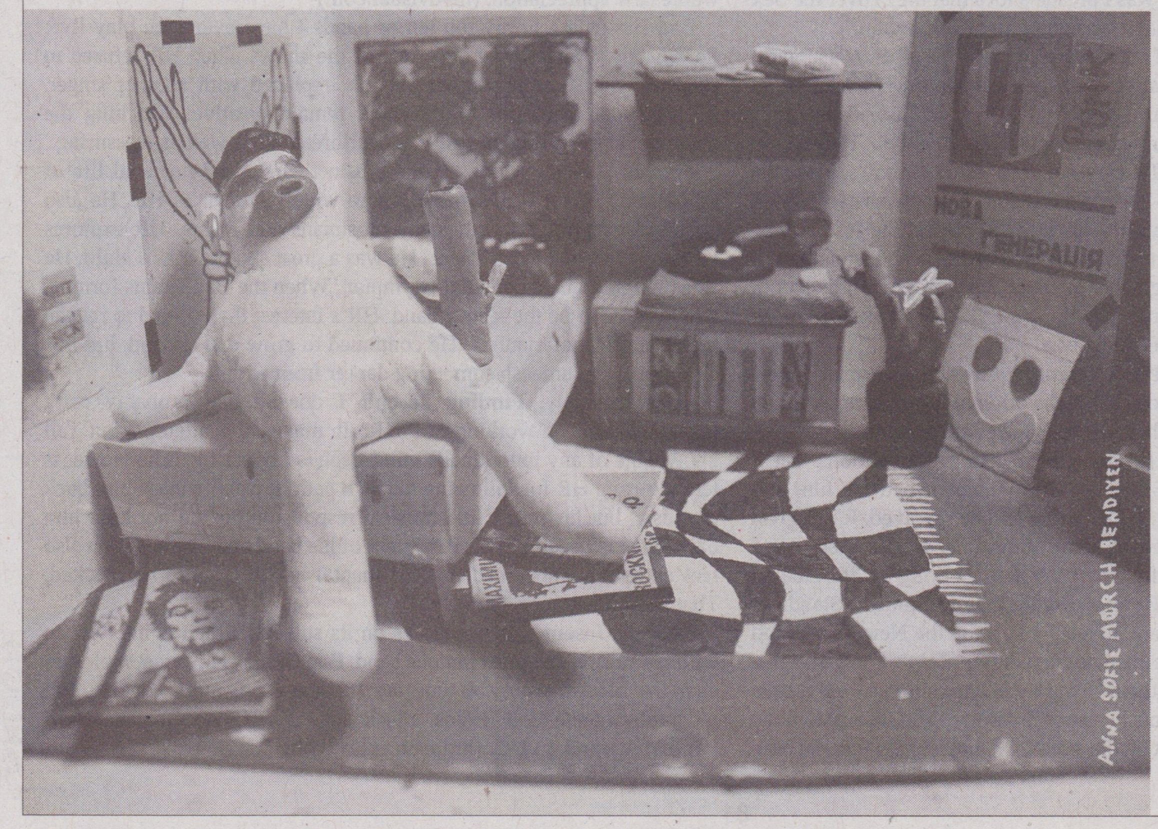

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Europa
My Mirror
QUINTRON

Europa My Mirror
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Quintron is a New Orleans-based musician who has been making electronic, garage-y sounding music since the 1990s. Quintron also owns a music venue called the Spellcaster Lounge, and he is an inventor. He's well known for his Drum Buddy, which as you might guess is a sort of a drum machine, but it's more complicated than that. According to the Drum Buddy Wikipedia page, it's "a light-activated oscillating drum machine which operates on the principles of an optical sound theremin." He often collaborates with his wife Panacea / Miss Pussycat, who is an accomplished puppeteer, singer and all around artist. One would guess that their live shows are pretty lit.

Europa My Mirror is Quintron's tour diary that follows the three person crew as they puppeteer and Drum Buddy around Europe. This is not the first time they have been through this part of the world, as evidenced by the wealth of anecdotes the author drops on the reader, but this is the first time that Quintron has written a book about it, and for a first book, it's pretty great. Not only does Quintron succeed in giving true glimpses into the agony (and sometimes ecstasy) of being a touring band in Europe, but he also manages to connect his experiences into personal reflections about the world around him. Some highlights include going through the record collection of a fan's father, eating at a McDonald's in Portugal, traveling near the army base where he was born in Germany and a club called the Pits in Belgium, a place which just sounds kind of disgusting and great at the same time.

Quintron's writing style is light and witty; it's a pleasure to read. Also a pleasure are the occasional illustrations, minimalist line drawings that were created by Miss Pussycat. They don't always have a direct correlation to the surrounding text. This lovely tour diary is not very deep, though, and after reading it you wouldn't know the depths of Quintron's love of Miss Pussycat, nor the names of any but one of her puppets or the color of Quintron's hair. This is not necessarily a bad thing. He only mentions New Orleans in passing, which makes sense as this is a tour diary of Europe. But New Orleans is such a fascinating place with an exceptional history, and maybe some readers would like to learn more.

Europa My Mirror begins with an awful experience in Barcelona and is followed with countless other awful experiences as they travel through Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Holland and the UK. For six weeks straight, they played every night. "I won't bore you with the details of the good nights," he writes. "Broken down on the side of the road with no clothes and a dull spear is where all worthwhile tales begin." That is indeed where he starts this one.

The book is fairly linear, with the tour creating the structure of the story, and it gets pretty exciting at the end with the possibility of a fistfight(!) that may or may not actually happen. Quintron's story is linear in a metaphorical way as well. It would be wrong not to point out that this is yet another tale in the long line of American male writers who have traveled to Europe before him, using the ancient / beautiful / ugly / modern images and ideas of this continent as a backdrop to whatever story they want to spin.

Putting the tired trope of arty, white American men writing in Europe aside for a just a minute, *Europa My Mirror* does stand out as an interesting piece of writing that holds its own in terms of structure and the unique personality of the writer, who seemed to enjoy creating a book. This story begins with a shout out to anyone riding in the back of a touring band *right now* and ends with broken musical equipment and no lessons learned about the shit show that is international touring. Bets are that they will do it all over again soon. Look for more written works by Quintron in the future.

—Meghan Monahan

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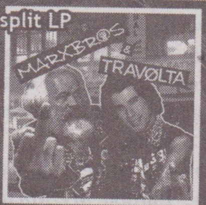
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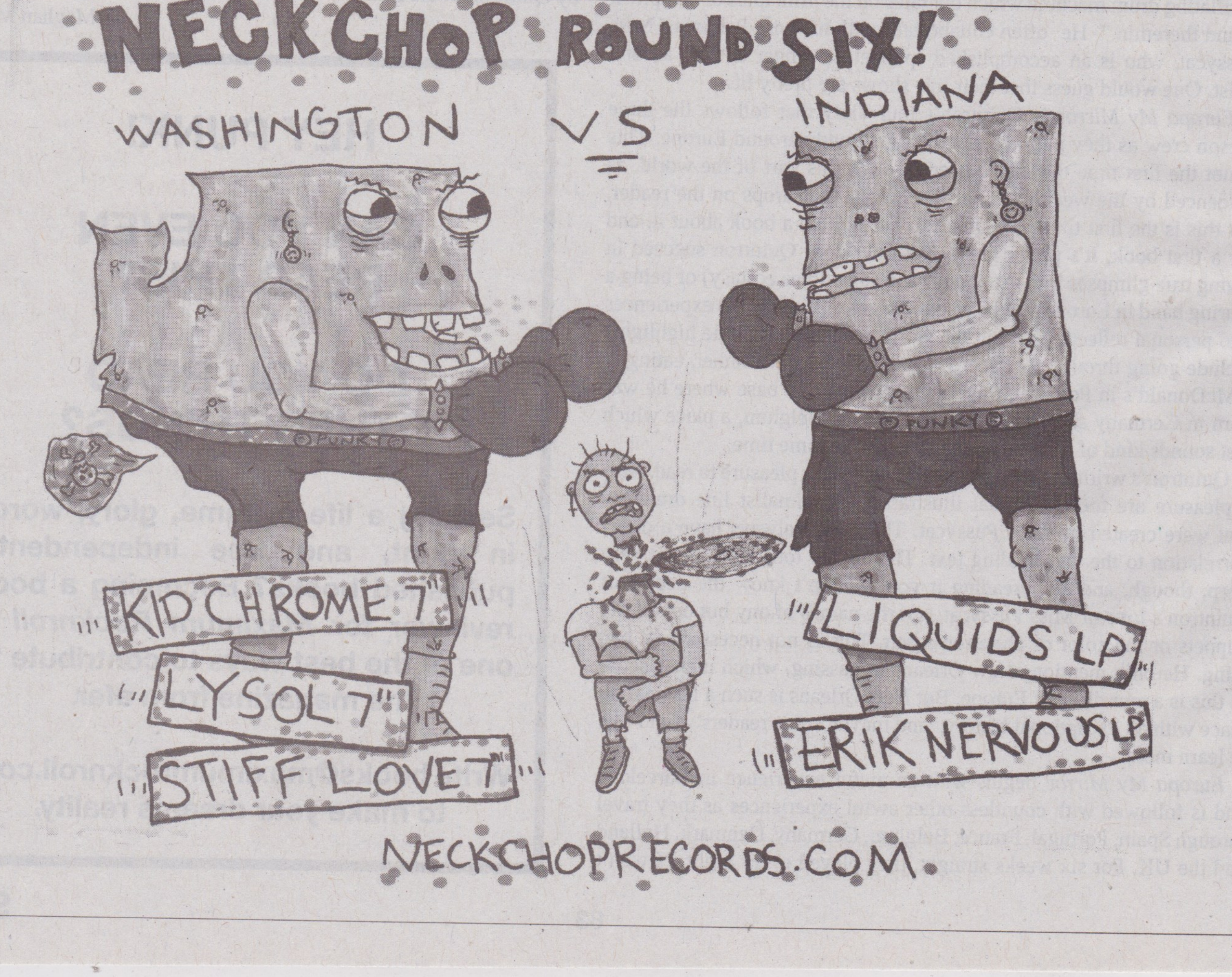
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AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS – "Big Attraction / Giddy Up" LP

Stoked! I've been burning a hole in my brain with this record for over a month now and the horned one must be lookin' out for me 'cause here I get to review it. Melbourne's Sharpie-influenced razorblade and bubblegum glam punkers make their full-length debut here, which is actually their two tapes put together in one cheeky package for you lucky punters. I say bubblegum only in the sense that it's catchy as fuck while being hard as nails, as if NIKKI AND THE CORVETTES were a bunch of tatted up bikies hopped up on lager and sulfate cruising the beach looking for a ruck. This kicks off with the fist crunching anthem of the year "I'm Not A Loser" into the glam bam of "Blowjobs" into the EYES-like slam and worm of "Mole (Sniff Sniff)." No let up! "Balaclava Lover Boogie" and "Westgate" give Amy Taylor a chance to strut all over Bon Scott's grave while guitarist Dec Martens wails and slays. "70's Street Munchies" is pure Sharpie loving Manzil Madness. "Caltex Cowgirl" will make the most hardened shed a tear and "Mandalay" should be in the next *Mad Max* movie or at least the sequel to *Stone*. Not a bad track here whatsoever, and you should pay whatever it takes to secure a copy. I have two and it's not nearly enough. (RO)
(Homeless)

ANMLS – LP

Slovenly has been kicking ass lately in the international bands category, and now they drop another worthy slab of monstrous Chilean punk on my turntable. The included press kit compares them to early and later BLACK FLAG, but I think that's mostly because "Tapo El Sol" starts with a tribute / rip off to "Nervous Breakdown." There is plenty of excellent jammy Ginn-like riffage throughout this as well, plus some Paul Leary lysergic interludes (doesn't the cover art look a lot like the BUTTHOLE's?!) but I'd also compare them a lot to CRIMEN or MUERTE or some of what is being pumped out of the Rat Trap Collective in Colombia. Whatever you choose to hear, it's a hard-to-pin-down record in just the right way that lends itself to many repeated listenings. Good stuff! (RO)
(Slovenly)

ANXIETY – "Wild Life" EP

For those seeking wound up *Death Church* worshipping HC that neatly borrows from the Doc Dart school of reality snot with slight SPIKE IN VAIN tendencies, here is a balm for your tortured ears. In short, if these reference points are your personal totems I would advise submitting to this EP as soon as humanly possible. Fave song is "Lizard Lads Under a Rock." Some of the in-between-song vocalizations are not to my liking, but such is life. The cover art of this disc is worth the purchase price alone. This came out last year, so perhaps this is already nestled in your 45 box. If not: Consume! (LG)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

THE ARMEDALITE RIFLES – "Revel In The Beauty Of The Sour Note" LP

It's bittersweet to be reviewing this, in the wake of the recent passing of much-loved ARMEDALITE RIFLES bassist (and father of bandleader James Pogo) Jay LoRubbio. I know his memory will live on amongst the Pine Bush, NY music community and beyond, as well as on this album. As expected on this third full-length from the RIFLES, we are treated to an eclectic mix of pop, punk, and post-punk styles: here and there you might catch dub-drenched shards of DAWSON or the MINUTEMEN giving way to CLASH / RAMONES "new oldies" before collapsing into free jazz skronk. Art because there's no other choice. (AM)
(Wrinky-Dink)

ARTIFICIAL DISSEMINATION – "Big Brother & The Dick Heads" EP

Canadian punk, aging ungracefully and complaining breathlessly... Two-piece shite with an emphasis on rawkin' and drinkin', you know the drill. It's actually kinda endearing to hear these goons scream "*Fuk the internet,*" rally against vaping, and accuse Walt Disney of Nazism. Don't get me wrong, this mostly stinks...But at least their intentions are relatable on a punky base level. A 7" EP housed in an LP-sized poster sleeve, just in case you weren't annoyed enough already. (MC)
(Seminal)

ASOCIALE – "Novum Comum" EP

Twenty-fifth anniversary reissue? Of a record that came out in 1992... God, I'm getting old. Can't say I've been feeling a lot of nostalgia for '90s Italian Oi!, but maybe you have. Someone out there has, anyway. The A-side (translated title: "No politics, just Oi!" is a plodding dirge typical of the genre, but the flip, "Hoxton Tom for President," is a passable REJECTS-esque tribute to the erstwhile 4 SKINS bassist. You know if you need this. (AM)
(Skinhead Sounds)

THE ASTRONAUTS – "It's All Done by Mirrors" LP

The goddamn ASTRONAUTS! Very excited to see this re-issue of their second LP. Although they have a handful of more memorable and catchy "hits," the ASTRONAUTS often venture into an area that is different and somewhat avant-garde. This record is no exception. Songs such as "Gold at the Top" incorporate the pace, simplicity, and somber tone of CRISIS, but moments of melody almost move in an anarcho direction along the lines of CHUMBAWAMBA. The ASTRONAUTS skillfully deliver moments that are melodic, simple, and straightforward, but these moments are then complemented by elements such as saxophone, fiddle, polka beats and synth that will keep you guessing. There are songs that are tinged with a pop-sensibility that could mistakenly bring '80s pop such as DEXYS MIDNIGHT RUNNERS to mind, but it's just one of many twists and turns that the ASTRONAUTS take. Those bouncy tunes transition into a dreamy and folk influenced direction, even omitting percussion. Lyrically, Mark Astronaut paints a picture that is eccentric, poetic, political, manic, and beautiful. The ASTRONAUTS are tough to pin down, and that is what sets them apart from many other bands of the same era. If you always wished the more avant-garde and experimental songs of the APOSTLES were a bit more melodic, that may give you an idea of the direction this record goes in. Not for everyone, but definitely recommended. (BP)
(La Vida Es un Mus)

ATMEN, WEITER... – "Leichtigkeit des Scheins" LP

This Landau, Germany residing punk trio, self-described as "Hc, Screamo, Emo, post-punk whatever [*sic*]," is probably what ENVY would sound like if they grew up in central Europe instead of Japan. Though I can't speak too much for the lyrics, as my high school German only gets me so far, there is a definite passion here that doesn't require a shared language. On side A, "Haus / Hell" and "Zähne Brecham" pack a back-to-back intensity that make them an excellent place to start if you want to be convinced to pick this up. This is a beginning-to-end-listening record that is really slammed home on the final track, "Stacheldraht." Someone needs to get them in on a States tour. (RH)
(30 Kilofieber / Meta Matters)

BARCELONA – "Un Último Ultrasonido Nació Y Murió En Barcelona" LP

A reminder that punk or hardcore doesn't have to fit any distinct sound to be "punk" or "hardcore." Noisy and tumbling like No Wave, BARCELONA's second LP has less of the bite of their earlier work but still continues to deconstruct the punk / hardcore form. There are fewer "hooks" here—the songs blur together into one abrasively ugly yet captivating mess. The whirling cacophony found here may be punk's answer to atmospheric black metal's exploration in creating eerie and otherworldly textures. This is hardcore as a soundscape; hardcore as the sounds of the depths of hell. (JD)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

BEND SINISTER – "Tape2" LP

Prior to the release of this absolutely shit-hot collection, BEND SINISTER were a mere footnote, a band most notable for having spawned off-shoots like A-FRAMES, the INTELLIGENCE, and too many others to mention. Kiss all that goodbye: *Tape2*, the bulk of which is actually performed by the classic A-FRAMES trio, ought to earn BEND SINISTER a worthy mention, at least within the same beat and breath as those more heralded later projects. It's crystal clear that the foundation (and initial creative fury and spark) for all that followed was laid here, with the assumed measures and calculations in sound supplanted by brute force, ridiculous volume and frequent, willing jumps toward abandon and cacophony. The moods and themes presented don't seem nearly as bleak as one would assume either, though everything is characteristically fucked and blunt...It's painfully clear that they already had the fuckin' recipe though: fifteen stranglers, not a goddamn dud in the bunch. The pummel and noise of "Plastic Doll" prefigures something you'd hear from LAMPS, not to mention the strangle-punk Lars and Erin would explore further with the DIPERS. And there's "Better Now," a very delinquent A-FRAMES embryo, one of the collection's great moments where you can hear the players' future rumblings take shape. Yes, I'm an unapologetic super-fan of this lot, but I don't hesitate to recommend this one to anyone craving impossible, clubbed-over-the-head, loud-ass punk mutant worming. Kudos to Homeless for getting this out there. Essential! (MC)
(Homeless)

BOOM BOOM KID – "El Disco del Invierno" CD

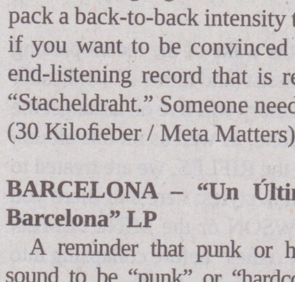
Bloody hell. Carlos, AKA Boom Boom Kid (the man, same name as the band) is still going strong, apparently. Last century he was the main man in FUN PEOPLE. Since their demise in 2001, he's been rocking away with BOOM BOOM KID. As ever, this latest full length (which must be at least their sixth or seventh, with dozens of 7"s littering the years too), is a very pleasant mix of pop punk, melodic hardcore, old '80s hardcore (think MINOR THREAT and the singalong-era 7 SECONDS) and new waveish guitar stuff. I've always had more than a soft spot for his output over the decades, and this short (15 songs in 27 minutes) sweet, self-released effort doesn't disappoint. As the sharp-eyed uninitiated may have garnered from the title, this lot is Argentinian and sings in Spanish (and are, apparently, all the better for it too). (RK)
(Ugly)

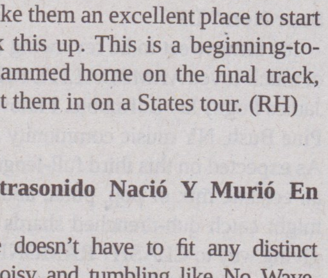
BOWS – "Neverunite" EP

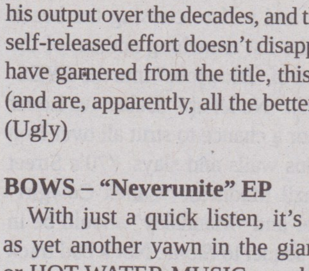
With just a quick listen, it's easy to dismiss this band from Japan as yet another yawn in the giant heap of growling LEATHERFACE or HOT WATER MUSIC worshipers, but there is a really cool energy that separates this from that giant mound. The familiar, obligatory gruff vocals sound like they fucking mean it, and those riffs, although from the same school that brought us those super sweet sweaty beardos, are undeniable and fresh. While at first I wrote this off as unnecessary, it's getting multiple spins from me right now. I dig it. (DZ)
(Brassneck / Waterslide)

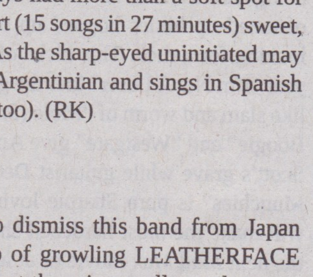
BRAIDEDVEINS – "Counternarratives I: What Did You do to Survive?" EP

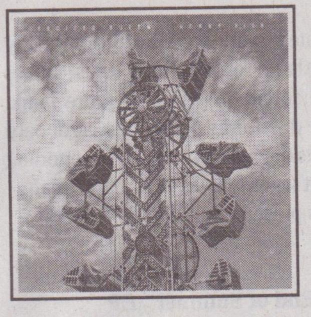
Three alternative hard rock tunes. A video for any of these songs could pop up on some *120 Minutes* retrospective and you wouldn't


THE ASTRONAUTS
IT'S ALL DONE BY MIRRORS

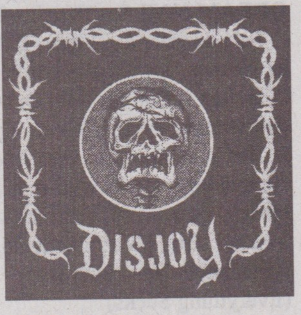








BUNDLES
DEAF DOGS



blink. It has elements of punk, hardcore, and metal but isn't actually any of those things. It sounds very much like AT THE DRIVE-IN or if GIRLS AGAINST BOYS had more guitar players than bass players. The sound is good and their songwriting is decently catchy, but I'm not sure that bummer lyrics, like being reminded that "Everything Dies," are the best thing at a time when the world is already in such a depressing state. (PA)
(Dropping Bombs)

BRUISER QUEEN – "Heavy High" LP

BRUISER QUEEN lays it on thick with their luxuriant and melodic sounds. Morgan's vocals are deep and syrupy, reminiscent of Shannon Shaw of SHANNON AND THE CLAMS, on top of her bright and sunny guitar hooks that interweave surf, alt pop, and '60s garage. I've been watching this band for a few years now, and think it's safe to say that BEST COAST, LA LUZ, and SHANNON AND THE CLAMS fans might look east to St. Louis for some dreamy tunes. As prolific as they are, "Telepathic Mind" is still one of their best tunes. (CR)
(Certified PR)

BUNDLES – "Deaf Dogs" LP

The first LP from this Boston, MA melodic punk rock band. The record starts with "Lorem Ipsum," first punch thrown and we're off to a great start. Initial thought: this vocalist has a fucking amazing voice! Second thought: these guys are great at making really catchy music intense as fuck. Even though it's mostly mid-tempo or even slower at times, I love it! The music itself reminds me of OFF WITH THEIR HEADS, but the vocalist has more of a high-pitched voice that is still really throaty. Pretty fucking great! This is issue #420, so at the risk of sounding like an idiot I'm gonna say this is record is top shelf. My suggestion if you like pop punk is to put on your headphones and crank this one up to full volume—I promise you won't regret it. (DB)
(Gunner)

THE CAVEMEN – "Nuke Earth" LP

Leather jackets? They got 'em. A *bad fuckin' attitude*? They got that too. Pictures of naked women on the back cover for absolutely no discernible reason? Well, you *know* they got that, baby! So what don't they got? *Any fucking songs!!* Seriously, this band is such a snooze I was forgetting every track while it was still playing! I suppose there's a chance for improvement on the next CAVEMEN record if they reroute all of their energy from their outfits to their songwriting. But luckily for me, that will be for someone else to judge. Truly a struggle to make it through this. (MF)
(Slovenly)

THE COWBOYS – "Live at Tony's Garage" EP

A friend of mine recently posited that we've reached peak COWBOYS saturation. In theory, I agree—and an EP of live recordings of previously released songs plus a cover of the SONICS' "The Witch" sounds especially egregious. But the fact is this: every time I hear a new COWBOYS record, I get excited again. They're simply a great enough band to justify all of these releases. And the slightly rougher sound on display here works exceptionally well in capturing the band's live energy and charisma. If you're trying to convince yourself that you don't need this record, well, I'm afraid I can't help you there. This is as essential as everything else they've done. (MF)
(Feel It)

THE COWBOYS – "Vol. 4" LP

On the tip o' e'ryone's gol-dern tongue lately, these Cowboys. Easy to hear why: good-tyme Midwestern sweat and jive, a curious hybrid of classic (but varied) rockisms and basement punk energy. It's exceedingly loose and bursting with charm, played with just a shit-ton of bonafide rock'n'roll spirit and heart. While mostly functioning as raucous party music, it's the isolated sweetie-pie "After Sunset" that totally fuckin' startles: '60s shimmer, almost like a moron reworking of LOVE—totally great! The rest is shaggier and punker, sure to please stoned punk dorks. (MC)
(Feel It)

CRUZ DE NAVAJAS – "Dominacion" LP

CRUZ DE NAVAJAS plays darkwave that is melodic, memorable, and haunting. While many current darkwave-influenced bands stay very rooted in the rhythm and production style of post-punk, CRUZ DE NAVAJAS dives headfirst into embracing the goth side of things. The ominous atmosphere created by the synths and drum machines takes this record in a much more electronic direction than many contemporary bands of a similar vein. This record seems to veer away from the "punk" side of post-punk and move in a much darker and electronic direction that most any fan of the classic 4AD catalog would greatly appreciate. "Dominacion" is well balanced by dance-able, driving rhythms with other more ethereal, ambient moments. Singer Sharon's haunting vocal melodies perfectly pull together the driving rhythm section and melodic guitar work. If you appreciate the sometimes slow, haunting, melodic ambiance of DECIMA VICTIMA but also enjoy the driving hits of XMAL DEUTSCHLAND and CLAN OF XYMOX, then check out this record! It is fucking great. (BP)
(Going Underground)

DISJOY – "Red Sky" EP

DISJOY from Cardiff, UK remind us that Rikk Agnew was in the ADOLESCENTS before he was in CHRISTIAN DEATH. This record channels the dejected attitude and forlorn chord progressions of early '80s L.A. punk as much as it revives the glam-goth legacy. Side A's three downtempo tracks are musically simple and center around guitar feedback and the bleakness of the shouted vocals. The track "Red Sky" brings in the wacky, tripped out guitar effects, because nihilism is more fun when reality is like, just in your mind, man...Something for everyone here. The most interesting track on the record is "Time," which almost grazes NEW ORDER territory with chorus on the bass, a sticky undercurrent of a pop hook, and unpredictable, grating guitar solos. In "Time," DISJOY hit the perfect balance of disgruntled noise, gothy anomie, and that irresistible dance beat. This track should be the soundtrack to some lost scene in *Suburbia*. (HB)
(Richter Scale)

DREAM NAILS – "Vagina Police" EP

Self-described "100% DIY feminist punk witches" sound just as glittery as they are gritty femme punk with "Vagina Police" and "Fascism Is Coming (Get Out Of Bed)." Both songs are simplistic, raw, and straight up Riot Grrrl. This EP has an essential zine, *Your Body Is Not Your Own, Articles About Reproductive Justice* that deftly and compellingly deals with transfeminist and intersectional reproductive justice, pregnancy and parenthood of the imprisoned and disabled, teenage birth, abortion stigma, and austerity politics as a reproductive rights issue. Need I say more? (CR)
(Everything Sucks)

ENDORPHINS LOST / OSK – split EP

If you're looking for your daily dose of blast beat, Seattle's ENDORPHINS LOST is here to help you out. These guys do it all, from CROSSED OUT powerviolence to REPULSION grind and even some DISRUPT crust. That's like all three kinds of music! Canada's OSK sounds like if SPAZZ were brutal heavy metal cavemen, instead of hardcore goofballs. Get this because grind's not fucking dead yet! (BA)
(Agromosh / All You Die / Delusion of Terror / New Age Pyrate Punx / Rotten to the Core)

END TIME – "Empty Spaces" 12"

Mysterious, austere post-punk is the toast, and '90s-era-Dischord angst is the peanut butter. The track "Slow Build" creates tension with a repetitive riff, slow build, and understated vocals, then breaks out into a more melodic, chaotic chorus—and kind of sums up what you are getting with this long-awaited first release from San Francisco's END TIME. Influences range from WIRE to the more thoughtful, reflective side of FUGAZI to the despairing catchiness of HÜSKER DÜ. The 12" EP has only six tracks and no filler. Cool artwork including a big fold out poster with politically-themed, pencil-drawn artwork that is reminiscent of something that would come with a record you had to mailorder from a print catalog in the '90s. Definitely something to check out. All the tracks are the mixtape song here. (HB)
(Fullyintercoastal)

EXOTICA – "Musique Exotique #02" LP

I'm dropping the needle on a band who is currently hyped and who everyone says I am supposed to like. It's a recipe for guaranteed disappointment...but here I go. Buzzsaw guitars and drums that lurch more than they swing. Overall, it's a recording that sounds like it was lost in a Spanish village in 1983 (a characteristic surely not lost on Paco from La Vida Es Un Mus). Vocals kick in, and it's insistent bursts of Spanish / English and it sounds fierce like fuck and it's starting to look like this EXOTICA band is well worth the hype. The A-side keeps getting better, and "Caminando" drops these keyboards at the end and *goddddddddddamn* I'm sold. The record writhes more than it rocks, but believe that when the 1-2-1-2 drops you will be rolling *hard*, and the appeal is clear. Sometimes the masses are right. (WN)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

FATALITAS – "Pas de Chance" EP

Hard driving space-punk that's treated quite well by the typically annoying lack of fidelity inherent in the lathe format. Here, it just makes high energy dark rockers FATALITAS sound weirder and more punk. We're in ultra phaser guitar land, while the drums sound like cardboard and struggle to keep up and the bass blurts out insistent '70s UK-sounding dark melodies...but faster. I almost don't want to hear what they "really" sound like, because I am hooked on this presentation. (WN)
(self-released)

THE GRIZZLY ADAMS BAND – "End of Summer" EP

Catchy as hell snotty punk rock from Germany. The first rack, "Girls Can't Wait," is a RAMONES-inspired garage song. The second, "Damned," draws a more fast punk rock energy. Side B kicks off with "Waste Another Day," an in-your-face rock'n'roll tune, and the record closes with "Better Teenaged," which is more of a catchy '90s punk rock song with solid and driving bass playing and melodic guitar harmonies. These dudes know how to make badass rock'n'roll! (DB)
(Chief)

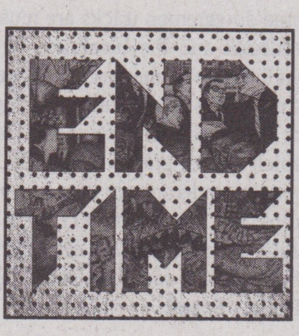
HARM DONE / SEX PRISONER – split 12"

HARM DONE starts off with a bleak piece of pure destruction, a mid paced mosh that lets up by getting *slower* and letting their weight truly sink in. And then...? Massive thrash metal assault punctuated by precise blasts and riff after riff after riff and throaty vocals. I can dissect the sounds and suggest that HARM DONE is an example of '90s commercial death / thrash influences on third (fourth?) wave power violence, but instead I will just say that their side of this split is a fuckin' monster. *On The Flip:* There's a national hotline to help provide immediate resources to victims and survivors of human trafficking: 888-373-7888 (or text "HELP" to 233733); humantraffickinghotline.org. Human trafficking and forced servitude affect millions of people around the world every year and many of them are actual, not ironic, sex prisoners. Like, not shock value sex prisoners further objectified to get a rise out of wimpy reviewers, but actual humans held prisoner and repeatedly raped. So...probably a good time to change your fucking band name. (WN)
(Deep Six / To Live A Lie)

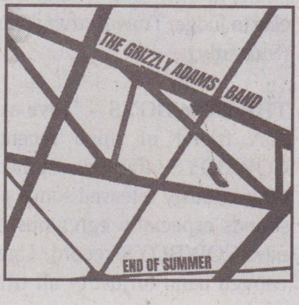
HAVAH – "Contravveleno" LP

No joke, this record sounds a little like NEW ORDER's *Substance* played 25% too slow. The vocals are low and dreamy, contrasting with piercing synth leads and minimalist guitar solos that reverberate through layers of effects. The drums stick to straightforward dance beats, complemented by driving basslines drenched in chorus. What sets this record apart from the pack of darkwave reenactors is the concept — the title of the record translates to "Antidote," and the record explores stories of Italian partisans who fought to resist Nazi-Fascists during WWII. The idea couldn't come at a more apt historical moment. The message is that there is always hope, and a shared dream of collective liberation that is worth fighting for. The sincerity and connection to these powerful themes bring the songs to life in a way that is too often

ENDORPHINS LOST
OSK

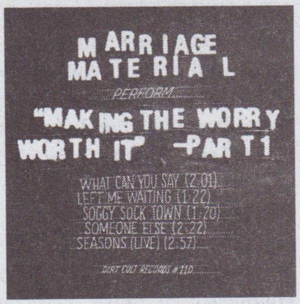


EXOTICA
musique exotique #02



HAVAH
CONTRAVVELENO

MARDOU COLD GRASP


MARRIAGE MATERIAL
PERFORM
"MAKING THE WORRY WORTH IT" -PART 1
WHAT CAN YOU SAY (2:01)
LEFT ME WAITING (1:22)
SOGGY SOCK TOWN (1:20)
SOMEONE ELSE (2:22)
SEASONS (LIVE) (2:57)
DIRT CULT RECORDS #110

missing in punk. (HB)
(Maple Death)

HÄXXAN – "The Magnificent Planet of Aline Vampiro II" LP

HÄXXAN play jangly garage rock moderne. We hear it done a million times these days, but they do it better than most. It's energetic, fuzzy and pleasant. This is their second album. They hail from Tel Aviv, Israel, but have recently relocated to Berlin. (CK)
(Slovenly)

KLASSE KRIMINALE – "Costruito In Italia" EP

This is a really nicely done reissue of the classic debut EP by this long running Italian punk / Oi! / ska band done for its 30th anniversary. I've never been a huge fan of what I've heard of this band, mostly due to my low tolerance for ska punk and not for the more serious RAC / NS ties that some of the members would form later. The ska number here is actually pretty listenable in a nice SPECIALS kind of way and every song from the anthemic opener to Antonella's X-RAY SPEX-style vocals on the title track to the goofy spaghetti western ode "Cow-Punk Simphony" is a banger. Definitely worth a re-listen or first spin for the fresh cuts. (RO)
(Skinhead Sounds)

LAST GANG – "Keep Them Counting" CD

This is a tuneful punk record with a gal who can scream with the best of them. Vocally it's similar to the MUFFS and the DISTILLERS, while musically it's like ANTI FLAG with the ska tendencies of RANCID on occasion. Pretty solid full length from this trio with a variety of sounds including the obligatory acoustic song to end the album. (RL)
(Fat)

LAW – "Swallow and Burn" EP

Proudly proclaiming Detroit Straight Edge, LAW plays downtuned, crunchy metallic hardcore of the '90s HATEBREED variety. The songs are well-written, slow and fast when they need to be, and move along well without getting bogged down in genre quagmires. The singer has a helluva set of pipes, and the recording has exactly the right amount of boom, with enough relative brightness to establish a dynamic sonic aesthetic. If you're one of the *MRR* readers that digs this kind of thing, I think you'll like this EP. (DG)
(Dropping Bombs)

MARDOU – "Cold Grasp" LP

Hauntingly pretty and unnervingly high-energy, Chicago's MARDOU deliver eleven tight, dynamic darkwave / post-punk tracks with the release of their debut LP. The drums are up front in the mix and depart from minimalist darkwave orthodoxy with frequent fills, clever accents, and the style and complexity you'd expect from a pop punk or power pop band. The influence of VACATION's Dylan McCarthy on guitar, drums, synth, and lyrical content on this record does not go unnoticed. Quick tempos and infectious synth leads reinterpret the darkwave genre into new territory, still lurking in shadows, but this time with more enthusiasm and less apathy. Definitely something to check out for anyone that loves the CURE and JOY DIVISION. (HB)
(Moniker)

MARRIAGE MATERIAL – "Making the Worry Worth It" EP

Music-as-therapy in full display here. Sometimes it's 100 times easier to play a song about your emotions than to talk about them. And sometimes you don't wanna talk to your friends about the same sad shit over and over again; you'd rather just listen to a record. And while this band may sound like a mix of TOYS THAT KILL and the SPITS, they unpack some baggage here. Songs about loss, loneliness and depression. And it's probably as unglamorous as you can make sorrow sound. Music with the heart of a beaten-down country musician and the soul of a pop punker. You can tell this record was a journey. You're not alone. (FS)
(Dirt Cult)

MEAN JEANS – "Jingles Collection" LP

Quite possibly the worst record I've listened to this decade. And I even like MEAN JEANS!!! But this is one hundred percent unlistenable. Let me sketch this out for you: this album is a collection of 23corporate jingles played in RAMONES-ish punk style. Applebee's, Coors Light, Taco Bell, Mountain Dew, the list goes on...it's terrible. Pure punksploitation to the max. Unless you are a high school stoner, or looking for the most brutal way to torture your roommates, I highly suggest never listening to this record. (FS)
(Fat Wreck)

METRIC EYES – "Zentrale" EP

DEAN DIRG + the BRIEFS + synth had me dreading listening to this one, but the reality is it's not all that bad. It's not all that good, either. It just...is. I'm certainly not hearing whatever inspired someone to release this four years after the band's demise. I imagine if you're into the aforementioned bands you might find more to like here, but this was barely a blip on my radar. (MF)
(Stencil Trash)

MUSTAT KALSARIT – "Juhlat" LP

I'm totally biased when it comes to Finnish punk. The first note of the guitar rings, and I'm hooked. The vocals come in and I'm immediately hypnotized. Granted, this is a little more mellow than the likes of KOLLAA KESTÄÄ, or early TINNERI, but it's definitely got that 1979–1981 feel when Finland kids threw some sweet, delicate, angelic-yet-off-key melodies on top of a sloppy, poppy guitar and called it punk. There's some badass switch-up vocals with a slightly trippy, sometimes really dreamy feel, and even some occasional sweet country licks thrown in. Combined with the fantastic artwork on gatefold, this my favorite release this month. Fans of the aforementioned legends, as well as sloppy stuff like APOSTLES, or even ANIMALS AND MEN should get your asses off your shitty couches and check this out. (DZ)
(Hikinauhat)

NEGATIVE VIBES – "Negative Vibes" EP

Straightforward hardcore that sounds both NYHC and Oi! influenced. A nice bright guitar sound and knack for writing circle-pit ready riffs separate this record from similar sounding bands. Nothing groundbreaking, but done well. (DG)
(DIY Koło / Melina Crew / N.I.C)

NO BABIES – "Someone To Watch Over Me" LP

Anti-Capitalist, anti-binary NxBx offer up their second LP with savage punk that is as perfectly precise as much as it is chaotic. A confluence of noise, hardcore, and No Wave with an undeniable influence of CRASS, their songs are tightly packed but unwind with explosions of sound and an endless barrage of brass blasts and angular off-kilter jazz-influenced bass that adds an odd cohesiveness. Jasmine's vocals deliver necessary and urgent wails that pierce through the noise. Each song is urgent and jarring. Perfect dystopian punk. (CR)
(Upset The Rhythm)

THE NUMBER ONES – "Another Side of the Number Ones" EP

It's really a fine line between sweet, catchy power pop and saccharine, foul pop punk, isn't it? Luckily, the NUMBER ONES mostly stay mainly on the former side of that line. The question becomes, then, whether or not they have the hooks to make the songs worth your while. More good news: hooks abound here. It's a little bit of a bummer that "You're So Happy I Could Cry," a gorgeous pop tune that could be a modern classic, suffers from a strained vocal performance, but the song still rips, as do the other three tracks. Certainly a standout in the largely dismal field of contemporary power pop. (MF)
(Sorry State)

PADKAROSDA – "Tetova Lelkek" LP

The newest PADKAROSDA LP, *Tetova Lelkek,* is really interesting and fucking great. Imagine taking the dark ambiance of RUDIMENTARY PENI, the ferocity and jarring nature of DIE KREUZEN and the reverbed-tone of BED BOYS, and putting them all together in some weird, fucked up concoction and you might get PADKAROSDA. This LP seems to display their growth as a band by not maintaining the speed of their previous recordings, venturing more in a post-punk direction, and in general seems to play off more of their darker and melodic tendencies. In some of the fast and melodic moments, BLANK SPELL may be a fitting comparison. The general tone is what you may expect of a post-punk record but the riffs and overall mood of the record still maintain a certain level of aggression. Singer Vereb's vocals are dark, twisted, and perfectly fitting for the music being made. Overall, there are a lot of really interesting subtleties being woven throughout this record on all sides of the recording. The guitar work on the closing song "Korkep" really drew me in. This record takes hardcore punk into a darker and more melodic direction that is really thoughtful and enjoyable. (BP)
(Static Age)

LOS PARIAS – "Family Witchcraft Attack" EP

This is pretty wacky. The music is '90s throwback electro-punk with a psychedelic vibe. The vocals are bratty and high-pitched. The singing style varies from sounding like they are being sung through a bullhorn *à la* BUTTHOLE SURFERS to a groovy sing-songy hippie ramble, which makes it funnier that one of the songs is called "There Ain't No Such Thing As Free Love." This gets stranger with repeated listens. I recommend ten times in a row. Endnote: I have chosen the band name spelling from the front of the record. On the inside sleeve it is written PARIAH, and on the label's website it's PARIUH. Listener's choice. (CK)
(Moniker)

PINEAPPLES – "Shaken / Orange Sunset"

A pleasingly inoffensive single of edgy noise-pop from these reformed stalwarts of the early '90s New York scene. "Shaken" has a classic rock, GUIDED BY VOICES-meets-TOM PETTY vibe, while "Orange Sunset" has the surfy vibes of SHADOWY MEN ON A SHADOWY PLANET. These chaps know how to write a song, but the whole thing may be a little too polished to really grab the average glue-addled *MRR* reader. (AM)
(Wicked Ape)

POWER – "Road Dog / Death Kid"

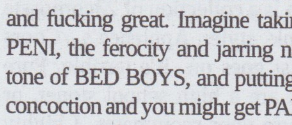
Damn, Shipping Steel is turning into my favorite new label with every release a knockout so far and now the new single from POWER! Fuck me raw! "Road Dog" was first heard by this reviewer on their Third Man Live release, but this is a much better version channeling their best dirty pub rock BILLY THORPE AND THE AZTECS' interpretation of "Train Kept A Rollin'" that degenerates into some unbelievable LOBBY AND THE BALLS guitar madness that could be straight off the *Summer Jam* album. "Death Kid" is my favorite here and a real evil little fucker that will make you do bad things. While neither song is as strong as, say, "Slimy's Chains," this still blows doors on all the wannabe mustached retro rock posers out there for being the real deal and punk as fuck. Aces. (RO)
(Shipping Steel)

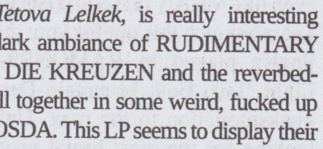
PREENING – "Greasetrap Frisbee" EP

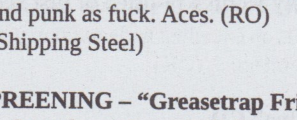
Saxophone in a punk band can go a lot of ways, many of them excruciating. PREENING, however, are only excruciating in an intentional sense; the sax-bass-drums trio's post-punk approach to free jazz skronk results in an appealingly abrasive sound. Occasionally things get altogether too goofy for me—particularly when it comes to the exaggerated vocal style—but overall these are some promising No Wavey tracks. (MF)
(Ever/Never)

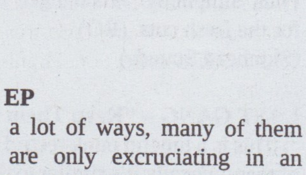
RABID PIGS / SIDETRACKED – split EP

Much like the cassette release I reviewed in the demo section, this recording suffers from digital clipping and editing that makes it sound like it's just random riffs pasted together (and from different recording sessions at that). I fuckin' love SIDETRACKED, their brand of sub-ten second hardcore / grind bursts is like a breath of fresh air, but this (apparently) new direction makes for a hard listen—which I'm sure is part of their goal. RABID PIGS are way more straightforward knuckle-


NO BABIES
SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME







Reptilians from andromeda
Dialogues for Monkeys

ROTBRAINS
Nekro Punk Terror

SCRAP BRAIN

dragging hardcore with superb moshes and off the rails blasts. Four tracks, all rippers. (WN)
(Rotten To The Core)

THE REAL KIDS – "The Kids 1974 Demos / The Real Kids 1977 Demos" CD
This CD is a beautiful package, though I would have preferred to review the LPs. The REAL KIDS are one of my favorite bands. I grew up listening to them and always assumed they were as popular everywhere as they were in Massachusetts. That they weren't is one of the worst crimes of rock'n'roll. As the title says, this CD collects eight demos from 1974 when they hadn't yet added the "Real" to their name and four demos from 1977 when they had. Most of the songs would be on their debut album. The CD also includes ten live tracks from the January 1977 record release party at Boston's infamous club The Rat. The record release show was broadcast on the commercial rock radio station WCOZ, and the quality is excellent. The music is fantastic, but the thing that really sells this is the 204-page booklet that contains the entire history of the REAL KIDS, with interviews and recollections from main man John Felice and seemingly everyone else ever involved. There are tons of great pictures, too. It is an excellent addendum to your REAL KIDS collection. Highly recommended. (CK)
(Crypt)

REPTILIANS FROM ANDROMEDA – "Dialogues for Monkeys" LP
A female-led group from Istanbul, Turkey with a gothy grunge sound and vocals that are equal parts NICO and COURTNEY LOVE worship. Provides a real good time, as if the monkeys, alien, dinosaur, and cute, little bunny bun on the cover didn't already give that away! The second track, very confusingly, fooled me into thinking I was about to hear a cover of "Smooth" by CARLOS SANTANA for about 30 seconds, but that didn't distract too much from the rest of the album. The whole thing is angry but played at about half the pace of typical anger, giving everything the dirty feel that really makes you want to get in there and soak in it. "More Than Coke" is the best rocker on the album and where you should start checking this out, if you still need convincing. (RH)
(Prof Sny)

RIK AND THE PIGS – "A Child's Gator" LP
Welp, here's a heapin' helping of Pigs, freshly butchered. Having just seen this iteration of the band live, doing all these tunes and more, I find myself forgetting whatever lukewarm reaction I had previously. With "A Child's Gator," it's safe to assume that they've hit whatever sweet-spot they've been shooting for: gigantic guitar punk with massive hooks, peppered with just enough glam to sharpen the entire affair. There's this hot-shit rocker attitude here, a classic vibe that you can trace through shit like TUFF DARTS and the DICTATORS that just reduces me to rubble when done right, as it is here. You can hear the absurdity and up-front confidence most on "Dear Ricky," where our heroes exclaim *"It's hard to be smart!"* I for one appreciate all their hard work. Very cool! (MC)
(Total Punk)

RIK AND THE PIGS – "Blue Jean Queen" EP
Cartoon KBD ALICE COOPER BAND 1974 high school talent show sleaze snarl. Riffs will make you bleach your hair, wear jeans so tight you have to lie down to get 'em on and stay up all night driving around doing nothing. This is nerdy and tuff at the same time. A good time for science club and the kids smoking behind the bleachers both. Lyrics are hilarious, a true treat. (LG)
(Feel it)

ROTBRAINS – "Nekro Punk Terror" 10"
This right here is my kind of shit! You could almost pass this off as some kind of long lost, proto-Nordic black metal band, but they're actually some modern day raw punks from Turkey. There are moments of CELTIC FROST and even VENOM in here, but it's all backed up by an ugly, raw D-beat and smothered in disgusting, vomitous vocals. It sounds like your measly little town being engulfed in a toxic cloud of festering death. You should definitely get this! (BA)
(Dead Generation)

ROYAL BRAT – "Eyesore" LP
Bratty, pissed off pop punk from Minneapolis. The singer seems to be working out some things, and there is no better way to do that than to blurt it out while being backed by a punk band. The music is energetic with simple beats and a charming style. It's angry, but still fun. (CK)
(Moniker)

SBSM – "Leave Your Body" EP
Music for Girls That Hate Cops. All kindsa girls. Desolate and wild sounds for the end of time, scraped out industrial punk scree for those that don't understand easy answers or common themes...Every time I have seen SBSM it has been a truly life affirming, terrifying transformative experience, a totality of sound and visual that is beautiful and space creating. Where you feel like there is a world for your kind made by the sound alone...Everything SBSM do is the best: the music, the writing, the Scream Queens radio show. This matches the name of the record label so aptly, it's thrilling. (LG)
(Thrilling Living)

SCRAP BRAIN – "Unhappy Hardcore" EP
SCRAP BRAIN deals in pounding abrasion that is often slow, sometimes fast, and always meticulous. The prominent, dirgey bass often takes the lead, while the guitar might do its own off-kilter thing that further accentuates the sentiment being expressed. The singer doesn't want you to fetishize their mental illness, they don't want you in their mind or they in yours, and they don't want to endure your dysentery opinions about them, and their visceral vocals force you to pay attention. Unlike many records where the cohesion of the riffs, songs, lyric, artwork, and presentation is an afterthought at best, every piece of the puzzle here is essential to the whole. (DG)
(Thrilling Living)

SHEATHE – CD
Hell yeah. These Singapore kids drop an absolutely killer dose of '90s alt / punk in our laps, a release that should make you punks that

pay attention to the resurgence of the sounds of *my* adolescence pay even more serious attention. DIY as fuck and shamelessly infectious, SHEATHE lure me in with real songs and actual hooks and guitar melodies instead of leaning on cheap gimmicks, and the result here is outstanding. "Dear Ben" is the choice track, laden with samples that owe even more to the emulated era, but there's plenty to grab onto here, and respect given to the band for still sounding like themselves while owing so plainly to those who came before them. What if NEON PISS had tried to be alt rock radio darlings from the '90s…? Yeah, SHEATHE are really good. (WN)
(self-released)

SILENT ERA – "O Horizon" LP

I'm not sure I can adequately express in these pages how inspired, proud, and happy this record makes me. The people in this band are punk lifers (and *MRR* shitworkers) who walk the walk, know what they're doing, and don't fuck around about it. That's reflected here in nine tracks of the sort of personally political punk that no one else really makes anymore (along with one more experimental interlude.) The writing and production may harken back to the '80s heyday of melodic hardcore I most associate with the likes of DAN, INSTIGATORS, or POLITICAL ASYLUM, but this is far from a straight genre exercise. This music stands in its own right, propelled by Michelle's powerful vocals. As outlined and enhanced in the lyric booklet, each of these songs is actually *about* something, a thoughtful evocation of a feeling or an examination of a situation that will no doubt resonate with any sentient punk in 2018. *O Horizon* deserves a place on everyone's turntable, like right now! (AM)
(Last Hour / Sabotage)

SLAUGHTER BOYS – "Down And Wired" EP

Whoa! Unexpected killer here. Self-released four-songer outta San Diego, this SLAUGHTER BOYS three piece may sound routine by-the-numbers punk rock at first glance, but it's all the typical pitfalls they've managed to avoid that make them so great. When's the last time you heard a band convincingly channel STIFF LITTLE FINGERS? Just pure anthemic punk rock'n'roll that doesn't beat you over the head with it. Kinda like the TEMPLARS. I wonder what Roehrs would have to say?! (GB)
(self-released)

SLENDER – "Walled Garden" EP

To be blunt, this is well worth your fucking time! Strange, well-crafted, cassette mutilation (I assume) bedroom goth pop. This sounds like if Nick Blinko and Peter fucking Murphy were fifteen years old and on restriction together in the same room with an acoustic guitar, a barely working 4-track, suitcase drums, a theremin, and maybe some shitty weed. It's that good! Be careful, though, it's also that weird. I hope that comes off as a compliment, because this weird shit is some seriously good weird shit. Find it. Find two copies and send me one. (DZ)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

THE SMUDJAS – "What We Have Is Today" LP

Interesting emo / pop punk from Milan, Italy. In a genre that is plagued with boring and annoying cliché bands, the SMUDJAS stick out like a beautiful thorn. This band sounds a lot like RVIVR in that it has raw and emotional vocals but really addictive melodies that stick with you long after you're done listening. Mid-tempo, catchy, melancholy, and full of hooks. I really liked this record! (DB)
(Legno Adagio)

SPLNTR – "Trials Then and Now" CD

This Southern California band has been around since 1992, although they were broken up for a while. I've never heard of them, but this sounds pretty good. Well-produced punk that doesn't turn pop punk due to the bits of JELLO BIAFRA-like vocals. This reminds me of the GENERATORS, FANG, DECRY, and SOCIAL UNREST. Old school with some guitar licks without getting metal. (RL)
(Dead Lamb)

STRAIGHT ARROWS – "Out & Down / Franchisee"

STRAIGHT ARROWS are an Australian band. "Out & Down" reminds me a lot of BBQ. It is a jangly ballad with fuzzy guitar and really nice vocals. "Franchisee" is more rockin'. The vocals are more aggro and sing-songy. The music is faster, but maintains that jangliness. Excellent record. (CK)
(Spacecase)

SUBSONICS – "A Lot To Forget" LP

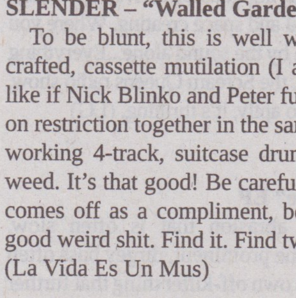
When I first laid my ears on this, I almost immediately threw it in the pile of regrettable, forgettable garage reenactments I hear almost daily. Skipping past the radio-friendly title track, though, this shit gets good and weird real quick like. Minimalistic, fairly clean guitars, light eggshaker, and organ accompany quirky surfy garage goodness with that killer warbly nerdy voice that I seem to be drawn to, like a young Leonard Grave Phillips (I know, fuck that dude) or at times, with a stretch, an even younger, mega-restrained Iggy. Not unlike if BIG BILL from Texas slowed their roll for one fucking second The beat is a little too mellow and strange to be lumped in with the rest of the average, aging, rock'n'roll-style garage stereotypes that pop up every 30 seconds or so, but this shit is pretty real and I want more. (DZ)
(Slovenly)

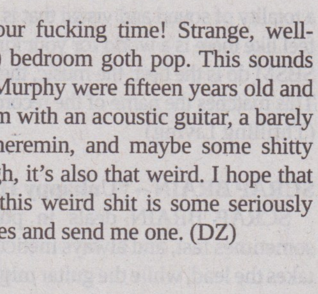
SUFFER THE PAIN – "Hellbound" CD

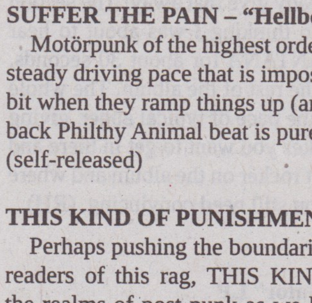
Motörpunk of the highest order, with death / black metal vocals and a steady driving pace that is impossible to fuck with. They fall off a little bit when they ramp things up (and remember, I like it fast), but the laid back Philthy Animal beat is pure gold. (WN)
(self-released)

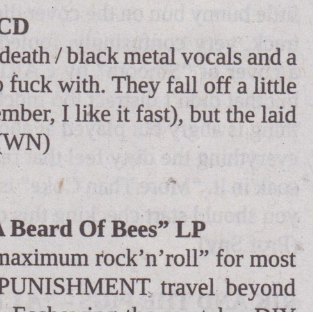
THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT – "A Beard Of Bees" LP

Perhaps pushing the boundaries of "maximum rock'n'roll" for most readers of this rag, THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT travel beyond the realms of post-punk as we know it. Eschewing the scratchy, DIY

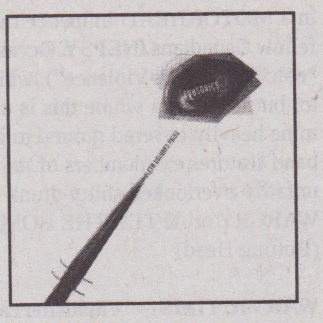







what we have is today
the Smudjas

STRAIGHT ARROWS



SÖNDRA & HÄRSKA
TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER

pop of their early-'80s New Zealand contemporaries, they dabble with experimental structure, piano wanderings, and melancholy folk-ish ballads. Imagine if you will the more experimental songs of *154* era WIRE, or the most tentative and delicate VELVET UNDERGROUND moments. Mood music for a Sunday morning perhaps. (AM)
(Superior Viaduct)

TIMEKILLER – "Defects of Character" EP

If members of NINE SHOCKS TERROR, LEBENDEN TOTEN, and S.H.I.T. were commissioned to write a soundtrack for a *Mad Max*-inspired short film that was only shot at night, and they were not let out of the studio until they had something wildly captivating, this might be the result. TIMEKILLER has a dense, abrasive, noisy hardcore sound that's generally characterized by frantic riffing over steady galloping drums and deep, cacophonous vocals, and wild guitars occasionally breaking into spastic rock leads. A couple of songs are dirgey in a detached, single-note-playing way, and offer breathing room against the rest of the musical backdrop. In sum, stop reading and go listen. (DG)
(self-released)

TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER – "Det Ofrivilliga Lidandets Maskineri" LP

Fist-pounding high tension Swedish hardcore that was about... *something*. The blunt intensity of their lyrical approach (which is in Swedish, but with accompanying explanations) is still refreshing, and their ability to combine raw Swedish 'core with some of the more metallic and non-kång grooves of the day is a reminder that things don't have to come out of the same cookie cutter. I'll spare you the history and the historical importance (since Andrew sorts that out), but this one is from 2001 and hits harder that almost anything you will hear from 2018. Harsh, thoughtful, abrasive and important. (WN)
(D-Takt & Råpunk / Luftslott)

TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER – "Människans Ringa Värde" LP

Tormented hardcore punk with elements of crust metal from Sweden. Boisterous, bouncy, and bright chords with clean, sort of slacker, scene-core breakdowns. Dark themes that churn within straightforward riffs and duel gravely vocal tones. TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER play with nu-metallic mid-tempo skatepunk style on some tracks, then devolve further with bitterness, grueling old school hardcore, with moments of '90s post and proto-hardcore. More frustrated than it is pissed, the message comes through brooding and somewhat adolescent, and the music young and thrashing. The band has quite an extensive catalog, as this is a reissue of their 2004 LP. This LP does sound like it is from that era in hardcore punk, but stands as their own flickering flame of Scandinavian angst. (JR)
(D-takt & Råpunk / Luftslott)

TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER – "Skellefetå Hardcore 2000-2009" LP

This long-running project band has featured members of bands representing a very diverse selection of genres, from the INTERNATIONAL NOISE CONSPIRACY to KNUGEN FALLER, ELECTRIC FUNERAL / WARVICTIMS, ENTOMBED and SATYRICON. This compilation of tracks reflects that diversity, ranging from short and punky black metal blasts to classic-style Swedish melodic punk to straightforward mid-tempo hardcore with D-beat influences. Indeed, the stylistic variations are so extreme that this could just as easily be described as a compilation of different bands as a collection of one band's output. I suppose that therein lies the charm of this record, really. Fuck, this record goes from the EARTH CRISIS piss-take "Karl Buechner Går Inte På Asfalt" to the DS-13-style Y2K thrash of "Brott Utan Straff" to the crusty D-beat "Ännij Ett Krig" over the course of about five minutes. This is much less like a proper record than it is an amazing hang-out session with some super-talented musician friends just jamming on whatever strikes their fancy. It's all good and some of it is great, but it just doesn't feel like a proper record, if that makes sense. For what it's worth, I'd definitely listen to it again. (AU)
(D-Takt & Råpunk / Luftslott)

TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER – "Söndra & Härska" LP

Sweden has a long history of overlap between the punk and metal scenes, with many of the early Swedish metal musicians performing in hardcore / crust bands and vice versa. TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER, which features members of PARANOID, AGAINST ME!, and fucking ENTOMBED, is no exception. Named after an early CRADLE OF FILTH demo, it should not be surprising that they play a form of metallic crust. On *Söndra & Härska*, their last LP (originally released in 2009) there are parts of each song that are heavily indebted to crust acts that have come before them (think the epic tendencies of NUX VOMICA instead of SKITSYSTEM), but they also owe a lot to the melodic sensibilities of Swedish metal acts such as DARK TRANQUILITY or even the almighty DISSECTION on a track or two. It's a nice change of pace from other black or death metal-influenced crust acts which tend to grasp at metal's obliterating tendencies at the expense of sick riffage. (JD)
(D-Takt & Råpunk / Luftslott)

THE TOYOTAS – "Turn Away" EP

German buzz punk from 2014, once shelved, now dusted off and presented in craft-faire fashion: a silkscreened, die-cut gatefold sleeve encasing a one-sided 10" on splattered vinyl. There's even less to say about the four tunes contained within, as they amount to little more than demo cast-offs that barely reach beyond the trappings of middling catchiness. A polished turd. (MC)
(Stencil Trash)

ULTRA – "Mistica Moderna" EP

Hey look, rad Spanish hardcore! This is the good stuff, straddling a line between the militant marching style of RIP and unhinged Italian madness *à la* NEGAZIONE, led by clearly enunciated but frantic vocals and some killer, purposefully sloppy guitar leads. The locked-in rhythm players provide the backbone, rooting the band in an '80s hardcore feel. Spot-on political lyrics and meticulous cut-and-paste-and-photocopy

graphic design only add to the appeal of the whole package. Just when you thought Spanish hardcore had had its moment, a record like this comes out to remind you that no, Spain is still harboring one of the best goddamn scenes in the world. Our copy is a big-hole EP with the 45 clip included, so you can't even say the band (and label) aren't giving you your money's worth! (AU)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

UNITED BOTTLES – "The Spirit And The Legacy" LP

Not a bad name for an Oi! / punk from Belfast. This band consists of the remaining members of RUNNING RIOT after their singer passed away. That band was a tad rawer and rougher as sadly much of this goes into the dreaded "Arena Oi!" category. *Ugh!* Sure, there are some strong numbers like "Big Left Hook" that would be improved by some toned down production, but hey, that's just me. They'll go great on a tour with the 2018 DROPKICK MURPHYS, DISTILLERS reunion or maybe...JOHN COUGAR? (RO)
(Distr-Oi!)

WARSICK – "Surrounded By Death" 12" EP

On the surface, this can easily be described as reverb-heavy D-beat *à la* the style that was trendy maybe three or four years ago, but WARSICK deserve better than to be dismissed as formula. While they're absolutely doing DISCHARGE-style hardcore, they've put together something that can't be so easily pigeonholed. The great strength of the band is their sense of melody: almost every one of the dozen tracks here has a catchy riff or chorus. The leads, while strictly following a Sweden-via-Stoke-on-Tent style, are impeccably executed, and some tracks ("Pigs on Your Back" is an excellent example) throw in a MOTÖRHEAD influence that compares favorably to the work of fellow Canadians INEPSY. Occasionally the band stretches out towards "epic" territory ("Violence"), which their style is not particularly suited to, but taken as a whole this is a pretty remarkable suite of tunes that mine heavily covered ground to good effect. It's worth noting that this band features ex-members of the ADHESIVES, one of Canada's most unfairly overlooked shitty drunk punk bands. Those of you who enjoy WARCRY or AFTER THE BOMBS will love this for sure. (AU)
(Rotting Head)

WARVICTIMS – "Världsherravälde" 12"

Goddamn, D-beat's UNHOLY GRAVE return with an older (circa 2014) recording on a Spanish label just to remind us that while they are sometimes over-prolific, they are also sometimes just *un-fuck-with-able*. Yeah, this is kinda corny at moments and leans a bit towards "stadium crust" style, but it's delivered with immense sincerity, and fuck if it isn't catchy as all hell. As busy as the dudes in this band are with all manners of side projects and bands and labels and whatnot, there is no excuse for WARVICTIMS to still be as great as they can be, and this EP delivers the best of WARVICTIMS in spades. "Sörnderknullad Jord" is as good a song as the band has ever produced, short and filled at every moment with eventful riffing, vicious vocal delivery, and super-aggressive playing on all parts. WARVICTIMS' discography is relatively vast, but this is definitely one of the jewels in the collection. Personally, I found the power metal style cover art kind of off-putting, but one listen to the record and it makes perfect sense. Are WARVICTIMS the D-beat MANOWAR? It seems increasingly likely that they are. (AU)
(Nuclear Fear)

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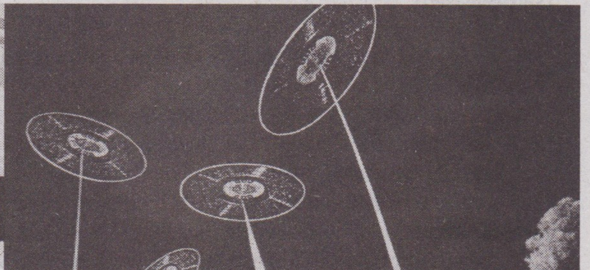

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To Live A Lie: 2825 Van Dyke Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27607-7021, tolivealie.com, tolivealie@gmail.com
Total Punk: floridasdying.com
Ugly: CC 2975, CP (1000) Correo Central, Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA, soundcloud.com/uglyrecords
Upset the Rhythm: upsettherhythm.co.uk
La Vida Es Un Mus: lavidaesunmus.com
Wicked Ape: PO Box 1510, Northampton, MA 01060, pineapplesband.com
Wrinky-Dink: 70 John's Estate Dr, Pine Bush, NY 12566, blurtingabnormalities.com

DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(CP) Colin Peden
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JR) Jason Ryan
(JD) Joan DeToro
(LJ) Legs
(MD) Michael de Toffoli
(WN) Robert Collins

#GOALS – Pet project from Greg Hetson (BAD RELIGION, CIRCLE JERKS) that comes off like 100% dad-punk poker night band. Apparently this band was created to showcase "the capabilities and all the styles of rock" Hetson can handle in his new California recording studio. Are you serious, dude? Like, this is the reason that the Kids keep trying to be new and exciting, because old people punk is fuckin' boring...And I'm old. (WN) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, facebook.com/hashtaggoals)

A FUTURE NOW PAST – Meat and 'taters guitar-fronted alt rock. 1990 IRS Records / DB Records, Southeast / Midwest college town fodder, it's easy to forget that these bands still exist. Minus two points for covering "Jumpin' Jack Flash," but they got 'em back for the live FALL cover. (WN) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, afuturenowpast.bandcamp.com, afnpast@gmail.com)

AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED vs. DENTAL WORK – *ANbRX Pharmaceuticals 3* – Absolutely massive and brutal noisecore / power electronics assault that will seriously fuck you up. Initially I was thinking *"I'm reviewing an AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED CD-R in 2018?"* and then I listened and I was like *"This is exactly what an AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED CD-R in 2018 should fuckin' sound like."* Given the pure noise treatment by DENTAL WORK, this disc is 54 minutes of pure non-stop mindfuckery. (WN) (?-song CD-R, lyrics not included, placentarecordings.bandcamp.com)

ALL BAD – *No Good* – Catchy sounding pop punk from Philadelphia. Lots of clean bass walks *à la* GREEN DAY, which is maybe the laziest review reference, but I hear it! Vocal melodies remind me of other bands from the East Coast like AYE NAKO and FLEABITE. Pretty tight and professional production-wise, kind of sounds like they would fit in well at the Fest or some similar pop punk mecca. The song structures are like if THIS IS MY FIST was less gritty. Another solid release from Get Better records. (LJ) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, allbad.bandcamp.com)

AUTOBODIES – *Power, Heat and Light* – Clean and precise post-punk out of Leeds, UK. The guitar and bass both playing angular, bouncy riffs with dueling rhythms complement overlapping guy / gal spoken vocals. If you could only experience this record as a visualization, it would be a sunny outdoor landscape of black and white checkerboard flooring stretching over gentle hills in all directions, with giant two-dimensional squares and triangles in primary colors hopping around erratically and dancing with each other. But despite the idyllic scenery, something isn't quite right here. The upbeat yet cynical lyrics are an added bonus. (HB) (8-song CD, lyrics not included, autobodiesband.bandcamp.com)

THE BARBECUTIES – *Eternal Dorkness* – Melodic pop punk with layers of slick guitars and backing harmonies. Like early GREEN DAY presentation of later (German) GREEN DAY output. Presented in chapters like a concept record, with at least three songs about girls, including "Coffee Shop Girl" and "Vegan Nazi Bitches." (WN) (13-song CD-R, lyrics included, thebarbecuties.bandcamp.com, monsterzerorecords.com)

BEROSSZULÁS / YOUTH SUCKS – Two wild as fuck Hungarian acts on one short ass cassette. BEROSSZULÁS are hardcore unhinged; raw, noisy and reduced to the pure essentials (the blast beats are nice too). YOUTH SUCKS are somewhat more restrained on the back side, opting for a bit of low end force over pure distortion...but there's still plenty of distortion. Both bands basically play North American hardcore punk, but tweaked and treated and just generally beat to shit. Recommended. (WN) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, szegyen-kazettak.tumblr.com)

THE BILLS – Sharp, snappy, sultry, slightly sterile. The recording gives this one a weird edge that rules and sucks at the same time... but it makes me fuckin' listen, and that's the main damn objective. Clean guitars all but lost in the mix, driving bass / drum section and catty female vocals that fit in perfectly with the weirdly casual tunes. Channel late '70s UK post / art punk and early '90s US DIY at the same time, then polish it up. Trust me here...it's good. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, bthlums@gmail.com)

CELEBRITY HANDSHAKE – *Death In Aisle Twelve* – This one was meant for Carolyn, but things in punk (and, let us be honest here, in life) rarely work out exactly as we hope and it wound up in my hands. Somewhere between Steven Jesse Bernstein and Billy Graham and a drug addled freak show, CELEBRITY HANDSHAKE deliver abstract monologues over sporadic and / or psychedelic guitar eruptions and weird ass noise...but it's still "cool." And for once, I mean "cool" in a good way. This one requires thought and attention, and is well worth the effort. (WN) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, c/o Aaron Haines, 243 Congress St. #A6, Portland, ME 04101)

CHUNDER BUFFET – *Cesspool* – This Saskatoon, Saskatchewan band has members from local bands SLOW DOWN MOLASSES, WIZARDS, and SHIRLEY AND THE PYRAMIDS. Singer / bassist Cassandra Lavoie's vocals range from clean singing to a pissed off snarl. These compact post-punk songs can thrust a BREEDERS vibe at you in one moment, and then briefly feel like a MYDOLLS song before careening into SLEATER-KINNEY territory. There's an interesting dream pop / shoegaze vibe to the whole album. Album closer "Promised Land" is a cover of a SKELETAL FAMILY single from 1985. (CP) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, chunderbuffet.bandcamp.com)

COQ – Like a reject from an early Rough Trade comp or a lost relic from an under the radar No Wave scene, Richmond's COQ squirm their way through four spurts of awkward guitars and a rhythm section that just dares you to figure out what their rhythm is. All the while, vocals soar lazily (or drunkenly) over the top, like a weird hybrid offspring of Lydia Lunch and Mark Smith. Not for the faint. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, iwantcoq.bandcamp.com)

COTTONTAIL – *secret hiding place* – This Philadelphia three piece originally formed in Tucson, AZ in 2011 at the same time as guitarist Luke's other band, RAMSHACKLE GLORY. Rather melodic punk rock with earnest, open lyrics and a MOUNTAIN GOATS vibe from Luke's singing. This is a good sounding cassette, and the lyrics tend toward the earnest and sometimes positively motivational: "*Remind yourself it's okay to take a risk here and there / To dabble in the things you normally wouldn't dare / Within the places from which you've run, nothing haunts like what you could've done,*" from "The Shaking Sound." "Neon Lights" features nice male-female harmonies and a guitar solo that Bob Stinson (REPLACEMENTS) could have been proud of. (CP) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, cottontail.bandcamp.com)

CRAMMM – High energy electro shock punk. I kinda don't know what's happening, but I definitely know that CRAMMM are superb. Siouxsie-styled vocals blurted over programmed industrial percussion and spastic riffs bashing out true freak "music" not even remotely intended for the masses. It's like fuckin' robots were programmed to create a lost 1980 Rough Trade no wave band...This shit is out there. And the shit is good. (WN) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, crammm.bandcamp.com)

CRONIES – Drums, bass, guitar, and vocals all come through only the left channel on this dubbed live cassette. If it had been copied in mono it would be a much less disconcerting effect. The group features members of the OFFENDED and BENNY & THE ROIDS. The first song is 38 seconds of hardcore fit to fly around the room to. The second song is 21 seconds about gentrifying posers. The third song is a one-minute-long STOOGES bluesy thing. The last song has a bass strum / drum roll thing that I really dig. This one-eared enigma of filthy hardcore is winning me over. I just listened to it like five times in less than fifteen minutes. (CP) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, dielaughing@yahoo.com)

DELETIONS – *Archives* – Cool and freaky synth-driven art-hardcore with political lyrics. Somewhere between CRASS chopped and screwed and ATARI TEENAGE RIOT on tranquilizers. Several of the tracks are truly far out—in a good way—while a few others throw their shadows on more familiar post-punk / darkwave territory. (HB) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, deletions.bandcamp.com)

DEPRESI MAYOR / DISFARE – Both bands play punk as fuck grind from Indonesia. Technical grind metal from DISFARE with abrupt stops, the gnarliness of MISERY INDEX, production comes and goes in waves, with only some moments of dropout clarity like old school grind similar to early BRUTAL TRUTH. DEPRESI MAYOR are even tighter with vocals at the forefront. Ripping through death metal like NASUM meets SEPTIC DEATH. Kudos on this super unique spastic cover of DOOM's "Police Bastard." (JR) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, grindtoday.com)

DFMK – *7 Canciones Sobre Un Individualismo Radical* – Yes, more please, *gracias*. Soul crushing, life affirming hardcore punk with a seriously don't-give-a-fuck rock'n'roll vibe. Like MC5 blowing NINE SHOCKS TERROR in an alley. Yeah, punk...it's *that* filthy and it's *that* good. (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, dfmk.bandcamp.com)

DISKORDIA – *Lobotomia Social* – Political Chilean crust / grind that was recorded in 2012 but is well worthy of filing under "better late than never" for the review section. A chaotic and utterly maniacal assault with dual vocals competing for the "angriest sound on earth," and a penchant for mosh breakdowns that sound like they just smoked a *lot* of speed. Not for the faint of heart, and the internet indicates that they certainly did not mellow after this release. (WN) (9-song CD-R, lyrics included, diskordiagrindcore.bandcamp.com)

DOMINANT HAND – True electronic goth wave sounds circa 1989 *(by way of 2017)* with a solid dancefloor thump designed to get you off your feet and an aura dedicated to darkness. This ain't punk, so I shouldn't be reviewing, it but it's super good. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, dominant-hand.banmdcamp.com)

DOUBLE SKELETON – *No World* – This has a kind of rainy day feeling to it. Authentic atmospheric modern rock that calls enough from grunge to utilize its best traits, but not enough to brand them a revival act. *No World* has the same brash adrenaline-rush aspect of SWERVEDRIVER and the thoughtful reflective capabilities of JAWBREAKER, all wallowing underneath "Everlong" vocals that sit just a little low in the mix. Seven songs that take their time to fill out a full-length, utilizing their brand of wash punk to a wide spectrum with enough of a banger smash tone to make all the melancholy feel very productive. A super well-executed tape. (MD) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, doubleskeleton.bandcamp.com/album/no-world)

THE DRY LOOK – *Arid Stare E.P.* – High energy garage rock with a bit of a power pop bent, the DRY LOOK clearly is not holding anything back here. There are a few unusual influences that come together in a cool way, like BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN-style guitar riffs, VELVET UNDERGROUND-style lilting spoken vocal parts, and full-on, unselfconscious '70s garage rock bravado. The songwriting is all over the place, with different styles flying at you here and there, kind of like someone else is repeatedly changing the radio station mid-song. A truly postmodern take on rock'n'roll. (HB) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, thedrylook.bandcamp.com)

ELECTRIC FUNERAL – *Total Funeral Complete Discography 2010–2013* – Can you ever have too much raw noise chaotic D-beat?? Well, I suppose that is debatable, but this three-cassette long box collection from ELECTRIC FUNERAL is by far the best presentation of it on cassette I've seen. Total Dis-fury crudity, similar to artists such as PISSCHRIST, INFERNOH, ASPECTS OF WAR. More clamorous but reminiscent of the Stick-steadiness of UK counterparts DOOM, EXCREMENT OF WAR, even with hints of DISCLOSE. More taut stressfulness comes through than said Japanese legends' indifference. Some parts sound a lot like ENT on the higher end of things. This hits the mark without blowing it away. If you are a collector of really cool boxsets and like this kind of punk, don't pass this up. 53 songs to sizzle your cranium. (JR) (3-cassette long-box-set, lyrics not included, electricfuneralsl.bandcamp.com)

ÉSZLELÉS – Solid crop of mania from Hungary this month, and ÉSZLELÉS are right there in the mix. Painfully blown out raw hardcore–discordant guitars, white hiss all over the mix, jerky rhythms that make you wiggle uncontrollably (try to remain still during "Önbiráskodás" and you will fail). Lots of spoken vocal bits that come off like interludes between bursts of true freak sounds. Way into this. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, eszleles.bandcamp.com)

FAIM – *Yeeeeeeeeeee!* It's fast as fuck, the mosh parts are infectious, and Kat's vocals are somewhere between legit and terrifying. Just a solid fuckin' slab of US hardcore, and if the end of "Empty" isn't the toughest thing in the mag right now, then it might be the entirety of "Dim" that comes right after. Don't snooze, punks. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, faim.bandcamp.com)

FAITHLESS – Full throttle hardcore with that somehow indescribable throaty vocal delivery. All out speed and immense power combine forces, and when they slow down for maximum impact, FAITHLESS do not waste their opportunity to destroy. Manic blasting hardcore / grind / fastcore fans rejoice, your savior has arrived. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, faithlessnyhc.bandcamp.com)

FALSEHOOD – Grind blasts meet hints of modern rock metal *à la* MASTODON, which is quickly stripped apart by gruesome vocals *à la* ASSÜCK. Total cacophonous destruction with galloping dismal doom layering and actual jamming sections emanated from '90s crust heaviness channeling WARCOLLAPSE. For fans of NAPALM DEATH, TERRORIZER, and all forms of especially down tuned death, doom and grindpunk. Started out okay and end up outstanding and dropped me on my face. (JR) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, falsehood.bandcamp.com)

FOILE Á DEUX – *Illness Is Business* – Whoa. It's like MELT BANANA and CARCASS and BOTCH in a blender but without a bass. Bursts of technical HC and noise rock and general weirdness with a hodgepodge of bizarro vocal deliveries (presumably from the same person). A trying listen for sure. (WN) (13-song cassette, lyrics not included, bandfolieadeux@gmail.com; crasslipsrecords.bandcamp.com)

GARY WRONG GROUP – *Cold Factory* – Once you skip past the *interminable* plodding intro track, GARY WRONG GROUP continues their winning streak of excellent mid-tempo punk. Almost every track on here is distinctly different from each other, proof of GWG's excellence. You got yer FLIPPER-style negative trips, something that sounds like someone besides Greg Sage writing a WIPERS song, garage madness, eerie, synth-heavy New Wave...Hell, there's even a song that sounds like an '80s band covering a classic power pop tune *and* a goddamn PINK REASON cover. Those with the patience for slower fare will find *Cold Factory* a tasty sampler of GWG's mastery. Those without will always huff their own dongs. (JD) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, jethrowrecords@yahoo.com)

HET WARD – *No One is Ever Going to Tell Us How to Love Again* – Relentless, hard as fuck—this Pittsburgh band strips down early 2000s crossover thrash only to build back up with heavy queer hardcore, most likely the heaviest yet in 2018. With driving *"ugh!"* breakdowns that make me want to smash ride my bicycle into cop cars and flip them into prison gates, the lyrics are an eloquently raw fed-up fuck you to good intentions of cis complacency. *"You're as shitty as the company you keep that keeps you nested in your bigotry."* Get this. (LJ) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, hetwardpgh.bandcamp.com)

HOOD RATS – *Digital Wasteland* – Ultra snappy punk rock'n'roll with snarled garage hardcore vocals and an overall approach that is like late '70s punk on speed (and yeah, I know that essentially all late '70s punks worth a shit were on speed anyway, but my point is that HOOD RATS go faster and harder)... Or maybe early '80s USHC with SONICS leads. Would fit nicely on Crypt or XClaim catalogs, and sounds absolutely current and relevant. Ripper. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, hoodrats.bandcamp.com)

HUMANOIDS – The bass starts and I go *"ooooppphhh"* as I picture the twenty-year-old mutants start to do that creepy crawl. And then HUMANOIDS explode with a *dupa-dupa* that is as urgent and demanding as it is dated (which means that in fifteen years, punk archaeologists are gonna be all like *"aaahhhh, I suspect this was conceived in the twenty-teens"*). But that don't mean the shit ain't good, quite the opposite—my only complaint is that the vocals are affected so severely that they become an afterthought, which is a shame because the actually sound like they are pretty cool. Solid ass band, and I suspect they will get better. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, humanoidspunk.bandcamp.com)

IRON STEEL – There is no shortage of underground speed metal bands, but I get really chuffed when I hear punks doing it and *almost* pulling it off. Instead of a steady beating, Budapest's IRON STEEL are like a drunken street fight, throwing haymakers all over the place and even landing a few. Guitars dominate the mix, and the tracks a killer in a MotörVenom sort of way, but everything here is gloriously rough around the edges and raw. What I mean to say is: this shit is pure. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, ironsteel.bandcamp.com)

JAD – Straight up, young punks: JAD is the best music in this issue of *MRR*. It's that creepy crawly mid paced lurch that everyone loves in 201whatever-year-it-is, but the difference is simple: JAD rips, and JAD's version of "mid paced" will tear your face off. Check the start of "Niewolnicy Naiwnosci" and you will rethink your love for whatever currently cool act you are fawning over...because JAD is *real*. It's dark, it's powerful, and it's incredibly intense hardcore. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, c/o M. Kucharski, Vl. Tyniecka 3712, 02-621 Warsaw, POLAND; jad.bandcamp.com)

JUMPIN' BEANS AND THE MOUSTACHES – *King's Medley / Three Beer Blues* – What if hipster garage punk clashed with shit-fi noise punk? I mean—you would at least be curious, right? One track is like four different people recording Elvis covers without consulting one another (or listening to the other tracks while recording)—just a complete and glorious mess. Second track is like Jon Spencer on mescaline...and with a crackhead enlisted at the last minute to do guitar overdubs. A crackhead who doesn't know how to "play" guitar. Get weird, y'all. (WN) (2-song CD-R, lyrics not included, c/o Aaron Haines, 243 Congress St. #A6, Portland, ME 04101)

LOST BARON – *Bastard Blood* – Crushing EP-length disc from a Belgian band that I first heard of about seventeen minutes ago. Heavy and apocalyptic mid-paced sludge / crust bringing to mind early KYLESA and '90s NEUROSIS. Extremely good, and well worthy of a full length platter. (WN) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, lostbaronband@gmail.com)

MALA FIDES – It's rare to find a demo with a coherent story instead of simply a collection of songs that show what the band sounds like. This tape starts and ends with *Raw Power* garage rock, especially the first song, "Heavy Blood," and they keep that banger quality throughout. It then moves into a nice atmospheric post-punk song, then into sensitive indie rock, so it feels like it's increasing introspectiveness. The last song, "Eyelids," is a collection of all three. It's a deep garage punk banger with plenty of post-punk coloring, all with indie rock introverted awareness. I assumed it'd be a black metal album due to the cover art's bleak and nightmarish artwork, so they really run the bases of identity. This sounds blunt, like it was handmade and raw, but still capturing a ton of detail. (MD) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, malafides.bandcamp.com/album/demo-2016-2)

MEDIOMUERTO – Devastating retrospective from Chilean (?) rippers, with tracks conceived between 1995 and 2013. Direct, raw blasting hardcore / PV / grind hybrid that is heavy, full of power, and harnesses discordant '90s epic HC as they bulldoze through 24 minutes of intensity. "Falso" might be a decade (or more) old, but it also might be the best track I will hear this month. (WN) (12-track CDr, lyrics included, xilofactor@gmail.com; losmediosestanmuertos@gmail.com)

MISAHISTERICA – *...3 Herejes Años* – It's sad that I am just now hearing this one man raw fastcore assault from Chile. Barebones and more than a little rough around the edges, with piercing high end (and high energy) vocals that (almost) hurt to listen to. The tracks are fuckin' insane, the pure execution and primal construction are suited perfectly to the raw presentation. Sixteen tracks culled from various releases spanning from 2011–2014, this release comes with highest recommendations for fans of raw, powerful hardcore punk. (WN) (16-song cassette, lyrics not included, misahisterica.bandcamp.com; misahisterica@gmail.com)

MOUTHFEEL – Tender and heartfelt, yet also passionate and angry, in a way that could be associated with crustpop or the punker end of folk-punk. Clean guitar leads and thoughtful vocal melodies for when you need to drunkenly hug all your friends because it's impossible to express your overwhelming love for these people who are saving your fucking life every moment of every single fucking day...and desperate maxed-out screaming parts for when living in the late-capitalist world of social disintegration and hyper-technological dystopia is really more than you can handle. Further proof that Denver might be part of the Pacific Northwest. (HB) (5-song CD-R, lyrics included, themouthfeel.bandcamp.com)

NORMS – *Hülye Hardcore* – Another offering from Hungary, which seems to be dominating the demo section this month. NORMS should be no strangers to those of you with a finger on the pulse, and this recording is fuckin' stellar even in the context of their previous(ly stellar) work. Angular and awkward hardcore, raw and mathematical, and with an intensity level that I challenge you to match. Weird discordant Ginn-esque guitar freak outs that take mere seconds add life to already vibrant, if raw as fuck, hardcore punk. NORMS are faster than your band *and* weirder than your band, and it's good to see that this tape is just a teaser for a full wax release—highly recommended. (WN) (10-song cassette,lyrics not included, normsbp@gmail.com; normsbp.bandcamp.com)

PASTAWAYS – *Tunes Of Terror vol. 1* – Fast and super catchy Chicago punk. There's a distinct The Fest vibe, or a hunch that PASTAWAYS are that middle band on the package tour that you've never heard of and they brought the house down. Melodic vocals fall a little flat sometimes (like "Camp Crystal Lake"), but overall this is some solid high energy club punk. (WN) (15-song CD-R, lyrics included, c/o Brent Carlson, 429 Virgie Pl., West Chicago, IL 60185; pastaways.bandcamp.com)

PERFUME-V – *Bless x 4* – The handwritten note says PERFUME-V are an homage to "'90s US DIY indie guitar rock," and that's exactly what they sound like. Except that PERFUME-V have the verve of modern hardcore instead of the pretension of the emulated acts who were (often) clawing at the rungs on the ladder to fame. The tracks here are absolutely worthy of 1991 SPIN accolades, and I would have jammed the shit out of them on my radio show in 1988, but PERFUME-V are too good to be cast aside as a rehash. (WN) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, reflectivetapes.bandcamp.com; perfume-v.bandcamp.com)

RAD – *Sacramento Is Rad +1* – Holy shit does this tape *smoke!* Sacramento's RAD show some great regional pride by covering hometown heroes REBEL TRUTH and the LIZARDS. The plus one? "Cult Band" by POISON IDEA. These four songs are played with such aplomb and ferocity that I fuckin' *lost it* when it was over, repeating the tape's program over and over again. RAD once again stands out as one of the best hardcore bands at the moment, and they have thoroughly convinced me that Sacramento truly is rad. Can't wait for their next release. (JD)
(4-song cassette, lyrics not included, sacramentorecords.com)

RAMPANT DECAY – *Belligerent Nation* – Tough as nails blasts of relentlessly grinding hardcore. The vocals are fierce and throat-searing, the breakdowns are fuckin' deadly, and the recording is massive. I really can't think of much more one could ask for. It's a goddamn burner. (WN) (15-song cassette, lyrics not included, rampantdecay.bandcamp.com)

GRAHAM REPULSKI – *Negative Highlight Reel* – "A mindfuck of psychedelic singer / songwriter missives and bedroom 4-track freak outs" *and / or* "True outsider sounds that flirt with the fringes of other realities." (WN) (6-song cassette, no lyrics, grahamrepulski.bandcamp.com)

RIKI – *Hot City* – Electronic synth-pop with drum machine and a cool, minimalist drab that feels like it's 2 am and I'm thizzed out in a basement, but in a healthy sweaty way. Bass and guitar mash together chunky sharp edges with crystalline ring outs to create unique sounding riffs. Lyrics are delivered in a soulless twilight harmonic way that really works. With a bit of melodica, the sound of this tape is bangin'. (LJ) (3 song cassette, lyrics included, riki.bandcamp.com; commoditytapes.blogspot.com)

ROLEX – Lightning fast mutant punk in the vein of LIQUIDS, OOZE, and absolutely manic US punk. But faster. Seriously... it's really fast, and it has *tons* of swagger. Noodling bass takes over the whole damn recording because it's so fuckin' smooth and sick. This thing is gonna light punk on fire. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, rolex.bandcamp.com)

SHAPESHIFTER – From Minneapolis, this punk band cradles a muddy bass tone with the shrill wail of guitar soloing, with vocals delivered short and brutal. It's bouncy and makes me wanna move my upper body from side to side without encumbering on other people's space. Some of the songs are straight up D-beat hardcore, some of them are more weird rock, with melodic bass lines that transcend the hard with the groovy. A combination done well and perhaps indicative of the blistering Midwest winters, where you have folks that live outside the bullshit enough to be original. Plus their output (screened tape & b/w photocopied insert) is very DIY and I respect that. (LJ) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, shapeshiftermpls@gmail.com)

SHEATH – This Chicago four-piece makes minimalist shoegaze, with blown-out guitars and deeply buried vocals. Track volumes are all over the place, but hey, mastering can be learned later. Head bobbing, droning, at time jangly guitars. (CP) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, sheath.bandcamp.com)

SIDETRACKED – *Impediment* – I've reviewed several SIDETRACKED releases over the years, and I have almost universally heaped praise upon them. Why? Because they are always fucking good. Lightning fast and devastatingly short fastcore / PV jams that are always engaging enough to make even the casual listener pay attention. Sure, I've heard that one of the dudes is a religious nutter (full disclosure: I do not know these people at all and this might not actually be true), but rippers are rippers and the lyrical content never seems to imply anything fucked up or oppressive...so let's jam. Now, as for *Impediment,* I feel like they phoned it in. All of the elements are there, but it feels like they are trying too hard. Trying to make all the songs shorter (the longest track here clocks in at ten seconds), trying to make everything more erratic (the between song edits feel like listening to a CD skipping). It's still a beast, and it's still an impressive effort at fifteen tracks clocking in at 1:19 *total* while still managing to make songs instead of shit-fi noise-core. But this time SIDETRACKED kinda falls flat. Fans will likely still enjoy, and I still endorse their efforts. (WN) (15-song cassette, lyrics included, sidetracked.bandcamp.com; tolivealie.com)

SINISTER PURPOSE – *Born In Hell* – Raw, bombastic Motörpunk. SINISTER PURPOSE do the little things—mid-riff drum fills and mini breakdowns, brief tasty leads—that hold your attention like a vice...and do so with the subtlety of a Scud missile. Full of fire, clenched fist hardcore punk. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, sinisterpurpose.bandcamp.com)

SIX SUNDAYS – *Defined Disorder* – It's like dad punk, but if the dads in question were politically progressive and had a hard-on for killer '80s Midwestern hardcore *and* DEAD MILKMEN, but they are also legit TENACIOUS D fans who have been listening since the skit days, and before the Dave Grohl collaborations. I hear Jim Carroll, I hear MIDDLE CLASS, I hear early Sub Pop, I hear TOXIC REASONS...These are some cool fuckin' dads and this demo is solid as fuck. (WN) (15-song CD-R, lyrics not included, sixsundays.bandcamp.com)

SOUVENIR ATOMICO – Suave, addictive and infinitely endearing ska / punk from Matamoros, TM, Mexico, just south of Brownsville, Texas. The sax is smooth and even the most anti-ska stalwart would have a hard time denying slower tracks like "Colt 45" and "La Sangre Llama" (the remix of the latter, included as a keyboard heavy bonus cut, is absolutely killer). The more upbeat tracks that make up the bulk of the disc fall more or less in line with traditional ska / punk (CITIZEN FISH, VGS, LEFTÖVER CRACK) and still manage to sound unique. Continued listens confirm that I am a fan. (WN) (8-song CD-R, lyrics not included, www.souveniratomico.com; souveniratomico@gmail.com)

STAKE – While I confess that I'm kinda getting tired of the trending dark punk formula, I still love coming across bands that manage to make it weird, like STAKE. Raw garage punk energy, and the warble in the vocals has as much in common with OBLIVIANS as with anything you'd consider "goth." Drum machine driven (or at least the most robotic drum machine sounding drummer ever) blown out outsider punk—you are welcome to shove them into whatever pigeonhole you like, but I'll be over here crushing beers and turning up the volume. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, stake.bandcamp.com)

SWHAT – *Wasty Tasty* – High energy catchy Australian punk. Garage guitars, heavy on the spunk, and hooks galore. Some of those hooks land closer to radio friendly alt rock, but hooks are hooks sometimes, and SWHAT packs a pretty legitimate punch throughout. *Related:* this is a CD-R version of their recent LP on Heart Of The Rat Records, and I kinda think it's funny when labels send cheap "promo" discs for proper vinyl releases and then get relegated to the demo section instead of the Big Kid Reviews section. (WN) (13-song CD-R, lyrics not included, swhat.bandcamp.com; info@heartoftheratrecords.com)

TESTBUNKER – *Im Würgegriff* – From Hamburg, TESTBUNKER have the energetic drive of '80s Dutch punk with the written delivery of '90s Latino bands. Good punk tape with dual vocals that are gravelly and deranged. Weird, loose, gutted and extra jovial. SHAM 69, UK SUBS meets DR. KNOW and UNCURBED. Digging this distro logo too: *"love hardcore, hate homophobia." Sehr gut und eingängig!* Love it. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, ugaugatapes.bandcamp.com)

VERLOS CAER – Demos are a weird world, dear reader, and that means I'm writing about this 2013 recording in 2018 *(don't jump to conclusions—we do get backed up, but this one was just mailed a few months ago)*. Epic multi vocal crust from South America, VERLOS CAER don't shy away from the (death) metal influences, but this is primarily a thick, churning crust assault. According to the internet, their 2015 recording is even better...Research recommended. (WN) (10-song CD-R, lyrics included, verloscaer.bandcamp.com)

WIDE HIPS 69 – *The Gang Bang Theory* – Feisty glam / grunge / punk with a SMUT and / or BABES IN TOYLAND bent. The winners are pure gold: "(You Gonna Make Me) Want You" and "You're Not Mine" specifically. The whole release is an excellent throwback to an early '90s punk / alt / indie world where the lines were blurrier. Also, vocals occasionally remind me of the BELLRAYS, and that's pretty tight. (WN) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, areapirata.com)

WVRM – *Can You Hear The Wind Howl* – Ruthless North Carolina crust / grind. WVRM definitely shine when they slow to a gut wrenching churn, but the fast parts are total devastation. It's over the top in every way possible, and it's fuckin' excellent (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, wvrmgrind.bandcamp.com)

ZAVAR – Completely fucked shit-fi noise punk from Hungary. Tracks range from squirmy modern hardcore to all out raw punk fury, and everything is blown to shit in the wildest way imaginable. Healthy doses of pure noise between (and within) tracks just to keep you on your toes...Fans of the True Destruction will (rightly) eat this one up. (WN) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, zavar.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Żero Function EP* – I'm going to make this short and painless as possible. DEATH CAT are awful. MR. BUNGLE, GUTTERMOUTH, ugh. Three-minute songs with accordion. "I like pizza?" Yeah? Uh, me too. CXA are the next band and actually sound like a dead, or dying, cat. From their bandcamp: "Considered to be one of the best hardcore thrash punk band coming out of Los Angeles." Sure. K-MART up next, so far the best offering if FUZZTONES were playing behind all the sodas in K-MART. Meatlocker blues, please kill me...DANGEROUSLY SLEAZY, yay more bar rock!! TSOL did it better. Get out of my tape deck, never to return again. (JR) (16-song cassette, lyrics not included, deathcat.bandcamp.com)

ZINES

Send zines for review to PO Box 460760,
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(GM) Gina Murrell
(JA) Joshua Kay
(JD) Joan DeToro
(MF) Miranda Fisher
(RH) Ryan Hertel

AWESOME THINGS
$3 / 30 pgs

You know how sometimes a joke is pretty funny, but then it keeps going and is awful, annoying, and terrible? Then it still keeps going and becomes really, really funny, uproariously funny? That's the arc that my enjoyment of this zine took. It's literally a list of a few hundred things that Liz Mason really likes. It starts out cute and fun to read before becoming tedious before becoming addictive and impossible to put down. It's literally just a list of cool things, and Liz Mason made it dramatic. (RH)

lizmasonisawesome.com / PO Box 477553, Chicago, IL 60647

CONFIRMATION BIAS: THE PRIVATE LIVES OF PUBLIC FEMMES
$4 / 12 pgs

An informative zine complete with hand-drawn illustrations about the lives of femme-leaning queers throughout the ages, including both AMAB and AFAB people. Each page is a snapshot into the queer lives of celebrities from the 20th century. The brief tidbits about each celeb are interesting and accurate, only once veering into speculation in the case of Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli, who was important in dressing queer celebrity women. Many figures included here are involved in the arts—there are musicians, authors, and film stars present—with the only non-artist being intersex CAMAB trans woman Roberta Cowell, who was an airforce pilot and one of the first people to go through sexual reassignment surgery. The info contained within is interesting, and the drawings are good, so this is well worth a read if you're interested in femme history. (JD)

mendmydress@gmail.com / etsy.com/shop/neelybat

DAGGER GLARES #1
$3 / 20 Pages

No frills photozine (mostly b&w but some color) giving a quick document of the goings on of Oakland punk weirdos. It's Penny's first zine, and I think their instincts seem good. The decision to reprint the show flyer followed by pictures of each local band might seem basic / obvious, but it's the kinda choice less rewarding efforts might overlook. Mostly band live shots (Ötzi, Mystic Priestess, Chasms, etc.) but real life / non-gig stuff bleeds out through the edges. (JA)

pennyroyalxxx@gmail.com

GEN-X GARBAGE #1
20 pgs

In *Gen-X Garbage*, Poliana presents the reader with page after page of racist dating app profiles. A seemingly endless stream of men wear headdresses, afro wigs, ironic sombreros, more sombreros, *so many sombreros*. As one pages through the zine and the initial shock wears off, the largely contextless photos eventually start to evoke a sense of dull discomfort that quite impressively mimics the feeling of mindlessly scrolling through a dating app, and a brief essay from the author at the end provides some necessary reflection. However, much as I love a straight-up photocopied zine, the poor quality of the pictures here sometimes makes it hard to tell what's going on. I'm more than willing to believe that Darrin, 45, is a racist asshole, but in the picture of his profile, all I can see is that he's holding two beers and is maybe wearing a necklace. That's just a minor complaint, though, and this is still well worth seeking out. (MF)

bibliophiliac.bigcartel.com

HIGH ON BURNING PHOTOGRAPHS: 20 YEARS OF ZINES #1
$8 / 134 pgs

In 1996, at age thirteen, Ocean Capewell made her first zine. Using a typewriter that she had bought for $10 from the public library, she "wrote and wrote." Capewell says, "I made zines for twenty years, longer than some people I know have been alive...I'm making this compilation, though, because zines changed my life." Almost twenty years of zine writing, *High on Burning Photographs* takes readers on a remarkable journey through Capewell's life via her independently published personal insights, from 1997 to 2014. From breakups and familial conflicts to construction jobs to a career in social work to international travel and relocation from one coast to another, it's practically all there. The good, the bad, the beautiful, the ugly, and the inspiring. (GM)

escape_well@yahoo.com

KEYBOARD WARRIOR #3
64 pgs

This third issue of *Keyboard Warrior* is apparently its last, and frankly, after reading, I can see why: this Swedish zine is so crammed full of content that it must have taken forever to put together. The bulk of this issue consists of interviews, mostly with hardcore and Oi! bands, and nearly all of them pull off the difficult feat of being interesting even to a reader who's not a particular fan of the bands featured. The author's questions are thoughtful and creative, qualities all too rare in punk interviews. There's also a neat feature called "Alternative Hardcore History" wherein the writer imagines an alternate history in which bands like Cro-Mags and Shelter had gotten involved with some heavier cults than just Krishna. It's unlike anything else I've read in a fanzine. This zine's major downfall, though, is its layout, which its author accurately describes in his intro to this issue as "weird, annoying, and unreadable." The (faux?) cut-and-paste style over super busy backgrounds would be hard enough to read, but add in the fact that the whole thing is printed on glossy paper, and it's even worse. The choice to go glossy is unfathomable to me; it not only makes everything far

more difficult to read, but it's gotta be way more expensive! Anyway, aesthetic complaints aside, a far more enjoyable read than I would have expected, and I hope the author continues to make zines—just preferably more readable ones. (MF)
Sistaversen.bigcartel.com / ragnarxrawk@gmail.com

LIFE IS POSERS: INFLAMMABLE METROPOLIS
$6 / 80 pgs
You know, to be honest, I've seen this comic strip in this very magazine and on the website, as well as ripped off and a few images put in other zines, and I've never really known what to think about the whole thing. Even I, a master of hypocrisy, an expert at sarcasm, have never really known how much of this strip is like the gentle jab one might receive from an insider, like a family member, or the painfully precise pinch of an ex, one who knows where it hurts and doesn't care who sees it... Or maybe it's just a punk who likes to make punk comics. To the half a dozen, give or take, who haven't seen Life Is Posers, it's a pretty professionally drawn black and white comic featuring punks with charged hair, skinheads, a few hippies (for laughs, of course) and even a band of rats. To be fair, the amount of quality punk puns secretly, and some not so secretly, sketched in here is beyond baffling. You should check it out, as it's way more intricate and thought out in this format than I ever gave the one-hitter strips credit for. (DZ)
Lifeisposers.bigcartel.com

MENTAL MATTER
$1 / 26 pgs
This zine is a series of narratives, mostly medical in nature, focusing heavily on the experiences of the zinester. Unfortunately, it's only about fifty percent readable. A good portion of the pages are photocopied in ways that make them too blurry or too light to read, and a few other pages use such tiny fonts that it's almost hard to make out that some of the dots are even letters. A short article on the zinester's endometriosis was informative, as I knew very little about the condition before. A letter to the zinester's twelve-year-old self and some poems here and there were also quite charming. (RH)
ecarlblomensqcc@gmail.com

MUSICA OBSCURA
$6 / 64 pages+DVD
Seventeen essays on the sounds of punksploitation, Cuba, Thailand, Cambodia, cults, and breakfast cereal giveaways. The accompanying DVD contains mp3 files of 136 tracks that can be listened along to while you read (the track numbers are even conveniently placed following the salient corresponding point). This is pretty much the hard copy / zine version of what would have been an interesting blog during the form's heyday in the middle of the last decade. This makes sense because it collects pieces published or left out from Adel Souto's run returning to music writing 2013–2017. Music blogs could be pretty cool before everything seemed to get micro'd out by social media. A lot of the people writing the better ones were older fanzines types happy to return to writing in a seemingly freer setting. Some of them got the itch to return to physical zine making again—this isn't really like that because again it seems like a hard copy of a blog with a disc of mp3s instead of embedded links. It's good, though—cool writing that covers interesting stuff—and you're reading reviews because pieces of folded paper have attributes a Wordpress page doesn't. (JA)
Adelsouto.com

NOTHING DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO ANYONE
18 pgs
A trip through the writer's head that offers glimpses of depression, anxiety, resentment at shitty treatment by others, not believing compliments or good things about oneself, and related feelings. Some of the text is quick lines or thoughts, while others are longer and arranged like streams of consciousness or (less commonly) poetry. The white block text, looking like all the same font but vertically stretched out to different lengths, is juxtaposed upon striking visuals that are varying combinations of collages, photos, and computer-generated static either in the background or taking up a whole page, and making use of a limited number of quite contrasting colors for the most part. I don't know enough about visual art to know how the aesthetic was designed, but it's a good match to the all-too-relatable words that go with. (DG)

OLD HAUNTS #1
$2 / 38 pgs
This is a reflection on friendship, loss, childhood, divorce, mental health, anxiety, shitty habits, music, and Teddy Roosevelt's house. This is a collection of cool photos including graffiti, streetscapes, some people, some knick-knacks, and a kitty. This is a perzine you should probably read. It's never boring, and it will make you want to get a coffee with Dan B. somewhere in New York. I had a very different upbringing from the zinester, but I couldn't help but relate to the universal "childhood can be really shitty" feel Dan brought to his own biography. I'll definitely read this again soon. (RH)
oldhaunts.zine@gmail.com / Dan B. 5915 71 st Ave, Apt 2L, Ridgewood, NY 11385

OUT OUT OUT: THE STORY OF ICE 9 AND COUNT VERTIGO
$4 / 32 pgs
Full disclosure: this zine is by Greg Harvester, a long time shitworker at *MRR* and a friend of mine. I have done my best to not allow that to affect my opinions of his work documenting the rise and fall of two of Portland's greatest unsung punk bands. Born out of frustration out of a lack of information about these seminal bands, Harvester details his obsession with the artists beginning with his first listen. Harvester found and interviewed two of the surviving members—Eddie "Jetson" Morgan and Dan "Dungeon" Demiankow—about the trajectory of the band's career. From their early years and formation, their time in the early Portland punk scene, the death of their bassist John Sogge, the name change from Ice 9 to Count Vertigo, through their breakup in the early '80s, Harvester leaves no stone unturned in his fascinating interviews with the members. This zine is the definitive work on two KBD favorites and comes complete with flyers, photos of the band, album art, and more. The story of Ice 9 and Count Vertigo is compelling and very different from your typical punk band story, and anybody interested in the history of punk should absolutely read this. (JD)
remoteoutposts@gmail.com / remoteoutposts.bigcartel.com / Greg Harvester, PO Box 40786, San Francisco, CA 94140

PUNK FLYERS: CRAIG CRAIGERSON
30 pgs
On page one, the author admits that these aren't very good, but they had fun making them, and hoped they had personality. I could leave that as the review, but I won't. To be honest, most of these aren't very good. They do, however, have a ton of personality. Well, most of them do, anyway. In a day where it's easier to find a gross image on the internet, download a font and throw a band name on there, and put it on your favorite media page, I think it's pretty rad to see a flyer. A flyer handmade by the promoter, not a fancy frameable multicolored acid trip that the promoter paid most of the future door money to have done. Just some simple, sketchy, asinine flyers. Maybe not worthy of printing a zine full of these flyers, but since we're being honest with each other, I am glad I saw this, so I guess it is totally worthy. Hell,

write the little rascal. The author says they don't charge for making a flyer. Maybe the punks in your town are sick of your art and you should just give everybody a fucking break. Trade flyer making duties with this guy, for fuck's sake. (DZ)
bebaynes@gmail.com

RELUCTANT MOSHER #5

£2.75 / 50 pgs

This zine tries to do too much, which might suggest why it falls a little short in interest and depth. The interviews with Blood Eagle and Higher Power are fairly promotion-y and surface level, and the multiple tour diaries / fest reviews, which I generally love as a vicarious-living motherfucker, were quite literally nondescript. I'm glad there's a venue called Temple Of Boom in Leeds, though, because Cypress Hill has tracks on that record. Oasis seems to be popular with hardcore kids coming into their own this decade, and the author recalls some mid-'90s shows of theirs when he was in his twenties. I like the idea of reviewing individual songs as opposed to full records, though the reviews themselves were less than compelling. The cut-and-paste layout is fine and does the job; the photos are reproduced well. (DG)
reluctantmosher@gmail.com

SLOW MOTION MIGRATION #1

$2 / 8 pgs

An eight-page meditation on identity, *Slow Motion Migration* specifically explores the meaning of "daughter." In this bilingual perzine, Fiza Jihan traces the evolution of her identity as daughter from her birth in Pakistan to grown womanhood, knowing she is "no longer a child. Sometimes I am surprised by the brown of my body, the rise of my breasts." Amid family photos of herself as a child, she asks, "What does the daughter become?" Aside from musings on what it means to be a daughter, Jihan also touches upon queer identity, calling herself "gay at my mom's house" and including an excerpt by the late gay Pakistani-American poet Ifti Nasim: "Remember, we are gay. We are free souls. We are never young or old. We give birth to ourselves." (GM)
fizijihan@gmail.com

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING #75

2 stamps or trade / 24 pages

Idy has been doing SFN for almost 30 years, and it shows. Strikes me as a good example of how a *fan*zine can convey a sense of self / the writer better than a *per*zine might be able, and it talks about cultural products better than a professional rag would. Zine, book, beverage, and show reviews; remembrance of a recently departed friend; and an extensive (almost half the page count) breakdown of the records of the (English) Beat. The show reviews come across like a letter from a friend—the drive, purchases made (or regrettably not made), and the food eaten taking up more space than the actual show. It's more readable and enjoyable for it. A fine-tuned voice that conveys what they're into in fine fashion. (JA)
PO Box 226 Massillon OH 44648 / idysfn@gmail.com

TOTALT JÄVLA MÖRKER: NORRLAND HARDCORE

62 pgs

This full-size color photozine visually (and only visually) chronicles the 1997–2017 existence of this band. Playing, recording, touring, hanging out, group shots, sharing meals, the exhilarating, the banal at the time but possibly romanticized in hindsight, and so forth. Other than a collage in the middle, each page contains anywhere between one and eight photos, and what could be repetitive layouts are used in a way that there's a relative lack of repetition. The photos come from over a dozen photographers, and I didn't see one that was anything less than technically top-notch. The arrangement is probably not chronological, as there does not seem to be a steady aging of the band members of the course of the zine. I suppose this zine is for diehard fans of this band, given the complete lack of text, or they're forcing you to do your own research if you like what you see. (DG)
totaltjavlamorker.com

TQ #8

£3 Europe, £4 world / 32 pages

The world covered might be on the "too experimental" tip for some *MRR* readers, but another issue of a great English zine that has been coming out at an impressive clip. Good thoughtful reviews and also reviews that become interviews (Penance Stare, Richard Skelton, and Jo Thomas), reviews of contemporary noise that have quick concise descriptions followed by haiku style expressive reviews of the same release, an alternative tour of Carmarthen in Wales, and an extra cover was added so that Dave Scott could grace the inside pages with thoughts on Mark E Smith. It's cool to have a reliable source to know what the new Chocolate Monk CD-Rs are like. (JA)
TQHQ Evenwood, Ovington, Northumberland. NE42 6DN. England / andywood23@hotmail.com / tqzine.blogspot.co.uk

XXX CANDY #2

$5 / 24 pgs

XXX Candy is a collection of erotic love poems about food. Pink on pink and thread-bound, this is the second issue of such poems by Cheryl Pineapple, member of the Bay Area art collective Shook Up Flowers. Poems printed in *XXX Candy* include "Toasted Marshmallow" ("Baby, I melted in your palms"), "Cotton Candy" ("You will be delicious"), "Caramel" ("Your voice rumbles molasses behind my ear"), "Baby Donuts" ("Own this moment make it everything springy and sweet"), and more. Ten poems in all are in this issue of *XXX Candy*. Interspersed between pink pages of erotic poetry are transparent inserts on which are images of candy, in keeping with the theme of this sweet and naughty zine. (GM)
unicornxunicorn@gmail.com

WELCOME TO FLAMINGOVILLE: GAMEBOOK

$8 / 52 pgs

A very cool zine! *Flamingoville* isn't just words and images on paper, it is also a game! The prolific Irene Lam, who's done quite a few beautifully-made zines and objects, has here created an absorbingly surreal experience that enters you into the imaginary world of Flamingoville. It's funny, too! I'm one of those idiots with the tail-end of a giant eye-roll left over from high school, so I started out a little skeptical of the sweetly-detailed, flamingo-palm-tree-pink-blue thing going on here. But if you were ever a freak for Solve-Them-Yourself Mysteries or Choose Your Own Adventure books, it's impossible to pull away from following all fifteen possible twists and turns through Flamingoville. Each ending is a hilarious surprise. (GJ)
asterisk-press.com

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL